Marxism Today

September 1988 £1.20

TUC Crisis:
Eric Hammond And
John Edmonds
Interviewed

Pop, Politics
And Mandela

Modern Dance

Supplement:
Strategy For The 90s

Olympic Games
Plus Interview With
Linford Christie

The Government's Royal Opposition

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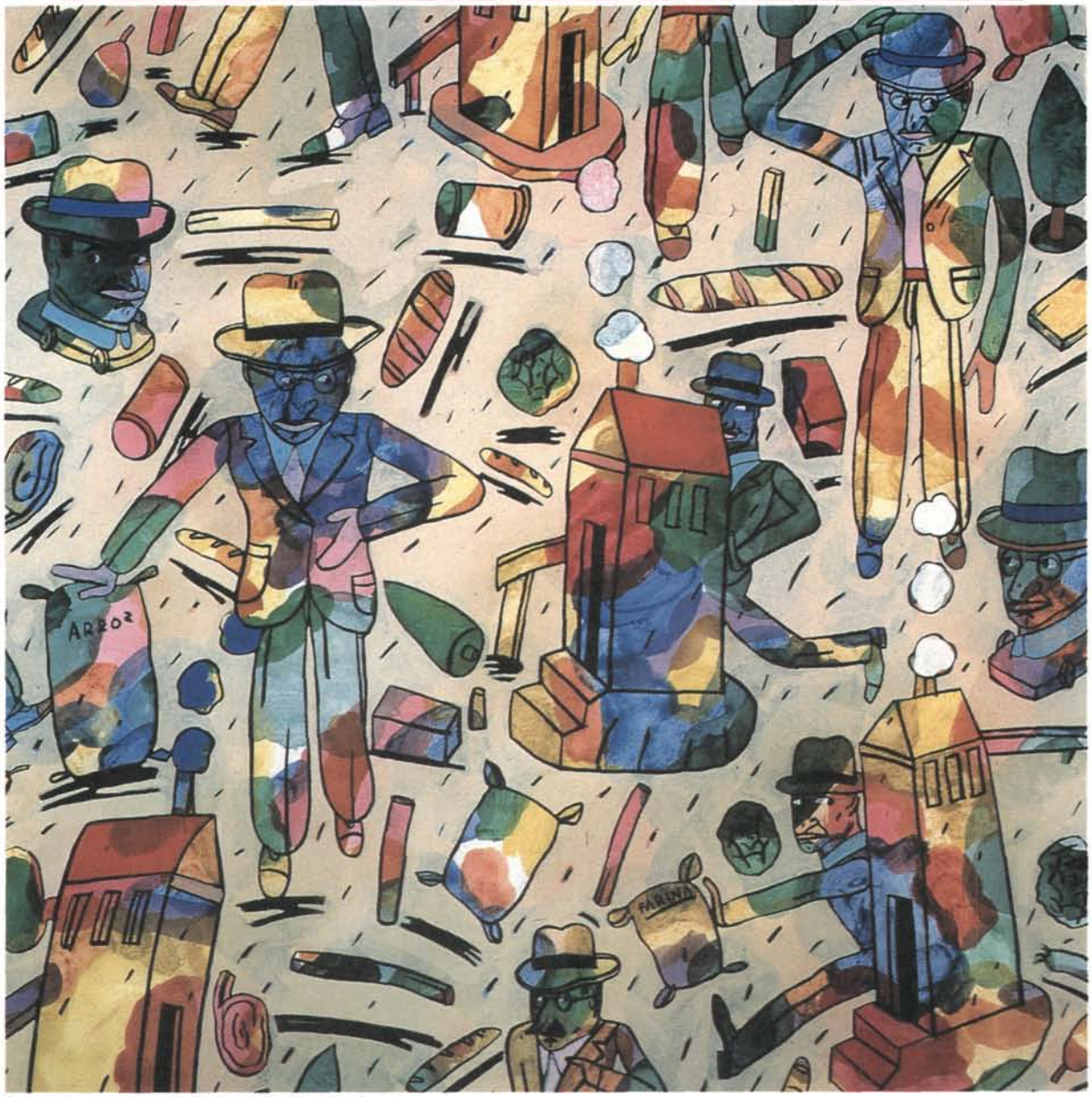
THE INTERNATIONAL ART SHOW FOR THE END OF WORLD HUNGER



Comida Para Todos (Food for Everybody), 1987 Antonio Seguí

The show links contemporary art, which often appears aloof from world problems, to a complex social issue that crosses political and geographical boundaries, urging viewers to 'think globally; act locally' by contributing money, taking political action or at least educating themselves about world hunger and how it might be ended forever.

An exhibition of contemporary art by:
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Organised by Artists to End Hunger Inc. New York

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Admission £3 and concessions £1.50 (admits to all three exhibitions)

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Kim Seong-Su from 'Disposable People' published by CIIR, £6.50

In the past year, popular opposition has propelled South Korea along a democratic path. Will reunification follow?

Seoul Searching

1988 is the first time the Olympics will have been held in a divided country. When the Games were originally allocated to Seoul, South Korea was under a military dictatorship, with a president, Chon Doo-hwan, who was an ex-general who had seized power in a coup.

Seoul wanted the Olympics for an obvious reason: to raise its prestige; but the people have been able to turn this to their advantage in ways which the regime did not envisage. Recognising that the regime would want to make itself look good to the world for the Olympics, the citizens of the South, including many from the fast-growing middle class, staged repeated demonstrations in 1987 which forced completely new conditions for elections to both the presidency and the National Assembly.

President Roh Tae-woo and his cabinet wield most of the power, but with 36% support in the presidential vote, are demonstrably in a minority. The National Assembly is now for the first time able to vet legislation and investigate some of the crimes of the past. Some of the bureaucracy, like the judiciary, is showing unprecedented independence and initiative.

The Western press has tended to suggest that the main reason South Korea has moved towards democracy recently is because of US pressure. This is patronising rubbish. The US has been in South Korea for 43 years and has little to its name except consistent support for undemocratic autocrats.

The US and the previous South Korean regimes have constantly deployed the argument that the main threat to the South was from North Korea. This has not been a feeling universally shared by the population of the South, who could see autocrats nearer home – and a US army, equipped with nuclear weapons, lodged within their own society. Moreover, the US army exercises direct formal command over the South Korean armed forces, a unique situation.

The issue of reunification is central to political life in Korea, to an extent which few outsiders understand. Korea is one of the oldest nations on earth, with a rich culture and indisputable national identity. Its nationalism is one of the strongest on the face of the globe. The division of the country will never be accepted. Koreans therefore operate not only on the basis of plans to reunify their nation, but with an eye to who was responsible for the division.

The recent democratisation has allowed access to much material demonstrating that the main responsibility for the original division lies with the USA – and America is therefore held to have a special responsiblity to help heal that division, or to get out of the way and let the Koreans themselves solve the problem.

The North has tried to use the issue of the Olympics to re-open a dialogue on reunification. It has called for co-hosting the Olympics and, possibly, a joint team. It has also called for new talks to discuss a non-aggression pact between North and South.

The North also wants US troops withdrawn from the South, but has not made this a precondition. There are no foreign troops in the North. North-South talks in 1972, which committed both sides to the withdrawal of foreign troops, broke down when the South claimed that US troops were not 'foreign'.

The South has always

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tried for government-to-government talks. The North has tried to reach round the 'government' to the people. For the first time, a reasonable compromise may now be found: because the 'opposition' has a majority in the Southern Assembly, a Southern team, including 'opposition' members, could meet with a team from the Northern Assembly on the border. This would be a major breakthrough. But the Southern government wants to control contacts from the Southern side and has violently blocked attempts by students to meet their Northern counterparts at the border.

Why has the South shifted its position so much? First of all, because it is in a strong position. It has a booming economy, a strong army, and better diplomatic support than the North. And secondly, public opinion in the South has shifted a lot on this issue. There is much wider backing for a real opening to the North, and much more criticism of the US role in causing the division of the country. Neither Roh nor Washington can entirely ignore this. But are they making concessions in the hope of temporarily demobilising opinion, intending to crack down after the Olympics are over?

Undoubtedly this option is being considered, but it would be hard to implement. Democratisation has gone quite far, and has a much stronger institutional basis than before. Some (but by no means all) political prisoners have been released and have told their stories. The best-known opposition figure, Kim Dae-jung, is a world-famous figure, with world-wide support. The eyes of the world, notoriously short-term-sighted, will swing away from Seoul after the Olympics are over, but even so, Korea will be much more firmly on the world journalists' map than before.

Perhaps the key factor is that the South, both Roh and the democratic movement, have nothing to lose and everything to gain from an opening up. ●

Jon Halliday

Betrayal Behind Bars

Prisons are, by definition, unhappy places for those forced to inhabit them. But the expression of this discontent in widespread rioting and destruction is a recent phenomenon. Barely a month passes without at least one major disturbance hitting the headlines.

Meanwhile the Prison Officers' Association (POA) appears to be locked in constant conflict with the Home Office. Never has morale among prison officers seemed so low, or industrial relations so bad. It appears ironic that this situation should exist only months after the implementation of a radical restructuring of working practices designed to bring lasting peace to the jails.

'Fresh Start', as the package is optimistically entitled, was formulated in the wake of the prison officers' overtime ban in April 1986 which led to widespread rioting and devastation in 18 prisons. The Home Office strategy was to buy out the excessive overtime (average 16 hours weekly per officer), on which the prison service had come to depend, with a greatly increased basic salary and the option for officers of contracting-in to a standard nine hours overtime per week, to be gradually phased out over the coming years.

The pay-off seemed to be that the POA would lose one of its strongest weapons, short of strike action – the overtime ban. It would also have to abandon the restrictive practices which had become characteristic of the prison service. The by-word of Fresh Start is flexibility. In return the package promised a unified career structure, so that all future governors would have to work their way up through the ranks, and enhanced regimes for prisoners.

A period of protracted negotiation followed the proposal before the POA national executive eventually recommended acceptance to its members. Suspicion remained, and it was obvious from the outset that the introduction of Fresh Start would be no easy matter.

Staff increases were clearly necessary to compensate for working hours lost through the reduction in overtime. It is ostensibly disputes over the numbers of additional staff needed to operate Fresh Start that are at the heart of the current difficulties. The Home Office sent assessment teams to each prison to calculate the staff complement required to make the new working arrangements feasible. The POA contends that these assessments fall far short of necessary levels. Local branches at over 30 prisons have now voted in favour of industrial action and this number seems set to rise. The membership of the POA, who gave the Fresh Start settlement their overwhelming support, now feel they have been betrayed.

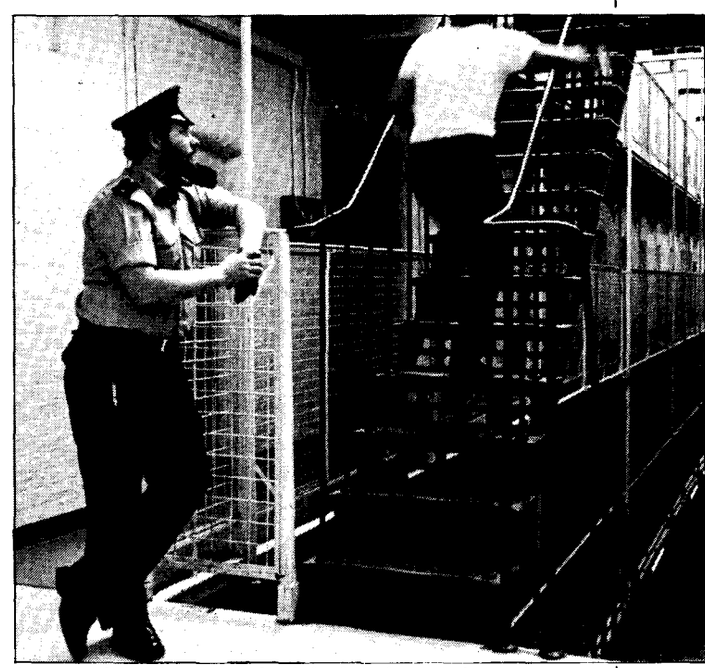
Far from enjoying enhanced regimes, prisoners are finding that staff shortages are resulting in restrictions. Predictably some of the most popular activities – evening classes, association and sport – have been the first to suffer. Priority in staff allocation is given to the essentials such as court escorts and security duties.

Prisoners have no effective legitimate channels through which to air their grievances and it is thus inevitable that riots are becoming a more commonplace feature of prison life.

This plays into the hands of the POA, who have always argued the case for staff increases by drawing attention to the more difficult and dangerous aspects of their job. However, it will almost inevitably backfire for prisoners, as increased security and more repressive regimes are introduced into the relatively liberal prisons which have borne the brunt of the disturbances so far.

Fresh Start now appears to prison officers as a cynical strategy designed to bring peace to the jails not by enhancing the pay and conditions of officers and improving prison regimes, but by neutralising the POA and cutting costs. The result to date has been anything but peaceful and it remains to be seen whether Fresh Start is likely to come to anything other than a sticky end. ●

Una Padel



Raissa Page/Format

Low morale has become endemic in the prison service

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Charity Ends At Home

As people rest their weary limbs after Sport Aid '88 culminates on September 11, they are entitled to wonder what their government is doing to eradicate world poverty.

For while the international fruit machine is jangling with private donations, the British government is plunging down the charts as far as overseas aid is concerned. In 1979, spending on aid as a percentage of GNP (the standard measure of national wealth) was 0.52%. This had slumped to 0.31% by 1986 and to 0.28% in 1987.

And it's not only the quantity but the quality of aid that matters. At the end of May, the British government urged the European Community to link its development aid more closely to economic reforms in recipient states. This means that beneficiaries may be required to undertake short-term economic policies or austerity programmes.

The government's record is in sharp contrast to Mrs Thatcher's pledges at various summit meetings to maintain and if possible increase levels of aid.

The public's seemingly inexhaustible willingness to give has undoubtedly been fostered by the Band Aid spirit – more important than the actual money it raised – which shifted the creeping meanie Thatcherite philosophy to a more humanitarian, internationalist consensus.

This is backed up by a post-Band Aid Marplan poll in September 1987, which showed that 62% of people would support higher taxes to pay for increased government aid to developing countries. A poll finding taken before Band Aid found that only 16% wanted the government to give more aid.

During his recent visit to the Front Line states, Neil Kinnock stated that a Labour government would raise British overseas aid by two and a half times, to at least the UN target of 0.7% of our national income. Let's hope that by then the public will still agree that charity does not begin and end at home. ●

Alison Whyte

Jenny Matthews/Format

Ten years of hard labour have won her the right to a hearing

Tipping The Scales

In an industrial tribunal hearing, between August 22-26, five part-time domestics from the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast are challenging the National Health Service job evaluation scheme, using the equal value amendment of the Equal Pay Act. This follows more than 10 years' intensive work by Nupe in Northern Ireland and could have a ripple effect throughout the UK.

Rosaleen Davidson, a Nupe steward and one of the women taking the test case, explains: 'We're one of the biggest groups of workers but to management, medics and even other workers, we were invisible. And of course while we're invisible no value is put on us.

We realised that we would have to value ourselves if we wanted other people to do likewise, so we started to get active. The cases aren't just about our take-home pay, but other things too, like recognising that women's jobs shouldn't just get stuck at the bottom of the pay scales; and recognising that part-time workers should have the same rights as full-timers.'

The Northern Ireland division of Nupe, with three out of four officials being women, has a long history of fighting against discrimination and low pay. Over the past few years the division has produced radical policies on pay.

Its strategy has been to take the debate to grassroot members and encourage them to frame their own demands for collective bargaining. Those demands look very different from the traditional pay claims built around the notional '40-hour week, white male worker' and one of the primary plans is the use of the equal value concept in collective bargaining, reinforced by the use of strategic cases. Equal value means a whole rethink and the turning upside down of established views on what the 'rate for the job' should be.

Until the latest changes in the law (1983 in Great Britain and 1984 in Northern Ireland) millions of women were unable to use the Equal Pay Act because it required them to compare their work with a man doing the same or broadly similar work. In the sex-segregated world of public service ancillary jobs few claims were possible. The equal value amendment, forced on the government by Europe, changes that.

The tribunal case involves arguing that the NHS evaluation scheme puts women on the lowest grade because of sex bias. If that argument is successful the women will go on to claim that their jobs are equal in worth to their male comparators – a porter and a groundsman, three grades higher. The men and women are all members of Nupe and all support the cases.

The women taking the cases are under no illusions. As Rosaleen says: 'We knew it was a long shot at the start. If we win, then we've secured something for thousands of other low paid women and men. If we lose, then we know the government wasn't serious about equal pay and it's back to the drawing board. We're a major target for their cuts anyway. We have been on strike about that before and we will be again.'

Over a decade ago it was argued that the Equal Pay Act would hasten cuts and privatisation. Those arguments are still being made today about equal value. But the government has for many years made NHS domestic services a target for cuts anyway, and despite the fact that there is no 'right time', the women go to court undaunted and the union has applauded their courage in pioneering the cases. ●

Patricia McKeown

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Private Settlement

When Transport Secretary Paul Channon finally decides the fate of England's most scenic railway line this November, many observers believe he will also be deciding the future of a clutch of around two dozen minor lines all over the country.

The arguments surrounding the 72-mile Settle-Carlisle line are well-rehearsed: British Rail says it is redundant and not needed in its streamlined network. Anti-closure campaigners say the route is part of our Victorian engineering heritage and its five trains per day form a vital lifeline for scattered Dales villages.

The result of the five-year fight against closure, a record number of 22,500 objections and the longest rail closure public hearing on record, is that the line has been put up for privatisation – the first main line to be sold off.

Ministers cheerfully admit that in private hands the line would almost certainly become a fun railway, operating steam trains only through the summer season. Guaranteed bus services would relieve the hardship caused by the loss of village stations along the line.

The Settle-Carlisle line is being offered for sale because the government says 80% of its passengers are tourists, rather than 'serious' travellers like commuters. But other routes carry an even higher proportion of holiday-makers. If the Settle-Carlisle is seen as a good privatisation bet, then around two dozen other lines would offer even better returns for private owners.

For around 15 years, BR deliberately starved the Settle line of funds for maintenance and repair. The result is a railway which needs millions spending on it. In contrast, scenic lines in Scotland and Wales have been thoroughly modernised, with new track, hi-tech signalling – allowing one person to operate an entire line – and automatic level crossings. With a small number of the latest diesel units they are among the cheapest railways in Europe to operate. ●

Alan Whitehouse

Is there more hope for movement on Nicaragua's borders if Dukakis wins the US race?

Dukakis Drifts Right

Since Michael Dukakis sewed up the US Democratic Party nomination he has quickly staked out a centrist foreign policy for the presidential showdown in November.

In contrast to the relatively liberal positions he espoused during the tight primary contests with Jesse Jackson, Dukakis' message now is aimed at wooing the confidence of big business and right-wing Democrats.

Dukakis' choice of foreign policy advisers reflect his fear of being branded a liberal. With little personal experience in foreign affairs, the governor has surrounded himself with a nucleus of professors from Harvard University's John F Kennedy school of government, most of whom were office-holders in previous administrations. The Kennedy school people pose as technocrats above politics (neither hawks nor doves, they call themselves owls) but represent a dangerously-outdated cold war vision.

Since 1980 most of the centre-of-centre brain trust has been in patient waiting, some working in the Reagan administration charting a middle-ground for US defence policy between the 'extremes' of disarmament and unchecked militarisation.

Dukakis' choice of Bentsen to 'balance' his liberal image indicates that the Democrats feel they not only have to cater to corporate interests, but actually have them on the ticket. A multi-million dollar oil tycoon, Bentsen has voted with Reagan on foreign policy issues more than any other Democratic senator save one.

Under Dukakis, the US would certainly place a higher priority on respect for human rights and international law in its foreign affairs. But the Massachusetts governor is unwilling to re-examine US interests abroad or rule out military intervention to promote those interests.

These days, the candidate emphasises his strong support for current NATO strategy and praises Reagan's approach to US-Soviet relations. He urges further negotiations to reduce nuclear and conventional arsenals in Europe, but recently proposed a concurrent 'Conventional Defence Initiative' (CDI) to bolster NATO forces, designed to 'apply advanced technology to the challenge of fighting – and winning – a conventional war' on European soil.

Dukakis' defence priorities favour a comprehensive test ban and he has consistently taken firm stands against the proposed Midgetman missile and the mobile version of the MX system. But at the same time he backs the highly

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Piers Cavendish/Reflex

accurate Trident D5 submarine-launched missiles, the Stealth bomber and new cruise missiles, as well as modernisation of land-based intercontinental missiles. The Dukakis team rejected the Jackson delegates' proposal for a 'no first use' pledge and for a Pentagon spending freeze.

On the primary trail Dukakis called for an immediate halt to SDI. But now that appears only to mean no premature deployment of technically unfeasible components of a 'shield', allowing research and development of defensive nuclear systems to continue 'at a reasonable pace'.

Dukakis has expressed a genuine sensitivity toward Latin America. A Spanish-speaker who studied in Peru, he has a personal link with the region. As governor he refused to send Massachusetts National Guard troops to Honduras and proclaimed an annual Central America week. Massachusetts was the first state to approve funds for refugees facing deportation. The $0.25m legal aid effectively halted deportation of thousands of Hondurans and Guatemalans.

The candidate has also been an outspoken opponent of contra aid. He claims he would amend the National Security Act to prohibit covert action to overthrow or destabilise foreign governments.

The Democrats incorporated some tough language on southern Africa into their otherwise cautiously-worded platform. Dukakis has consistently condemned the South Africa regime and its war on the Front Line states. He has backed a comprehensive sanctions bill presently in Congress that requires all US firms to divest within a year and bans almost all trade between the two countries. The only foreign policy concession that Jackson supporters managed to pry from Dukakis calls for 'a certain date by which US corporations must leave South Africa' and for 'special aid' to Mozambique.

At Jackson's prodding, Dukakis also came down hard on US policy toward Angola, sharply criticising military aid to Unita. A recent Dukakis statement asserted US policy 'has made us an ally of apartheid and of South Africa's aggression against its neighbours' and called for a negotiated settlement in Angola, and South Africa's immediate withdrawal from Namibia.

Party tacticians claim this centrist foreign policy strategy will win back voters they lost to Reagan in 1980 and 1984. But Dukakis' failure to mobilise a mass base will make campaign finances (where Republicans excel) a greater factor and ensure a largely conservative, middle-class turnout. And Dukakis' rightward drift has alienated many of the 7.7m progressives who cast their ballots for Jackson, a constituency crucial for Dukakis victories in the Northeast, California and the South. ●

Paul Hockenos

Sustaining A Vision

Among the many reasons why the death earlier this year of Raymond Williams at the age of 66 represented a tragic loss was his outstanding contribution to the adult education movement.

Raymond Williams worked full time as a joint staff tutor in adult education from 1946 – 61 teaching about 1,000 students, most of whom came to him through the Workers' Educational Association (WEA).

He believed passionately in the idea of an educated and participatory democracy and adult education played an essential part in his vision of a better society. With his death the adult education movement lost its most respected and authoritative radical voice.

A group of students, colleagues and friends have decided to present a tree and a wooden bench inscribed to Raymond Williams' memory to the Wedgwood Memorial College at Barlaston, as a simple and appropriate gesture of respect. The college is an adult residential centre which the WEA helped found in 1945.

Any surplus money raised from a public appeal will be used to help first time, unwaged, or educationally disadvantaged adult students who may be living in urban deprivation or rural isolation or who wish to pursue radical studies where funding is often hard to obtain.

***MT* readers wishing to make donations should send these before November 1, to the Raymond Williams Memorial Fund, c/o Dr Morag Schiach, 11 Hobart Road, Cambridge, CB1 3PU.** ●

Mary Joannou

Marxism Today

Move With The New Times

In years to come, when we look back on the 80s, we will see them as a watershed in capitalist development.

The decade has seen the era of Fordism – large-scale mass production – give way to post-Fordism, with its flexible specialisation and fragmentation of labour markets and new forms of consumer choice. With this economic transformation comes a tidal wave of change throughout society, affecting politics, culture, international and even personal relations.

Yet, while the world around it is in transition, the Left clings to the old certainties, too often failing to see new possibilities.

Marxism Today's forthcoming October issue is devoted to a special analysis of these **New Times:** what are they, what do they mean, how do they affect us all?

Special feature contributors include:

Charlie Leadbeater on choice

Rosalind Brunt and **Stuart Hall** on the politics of identity

Robin Murray on the economic basis of the new post-Fordist world; built on the information technology revolution and transformed working practices.

Don't miss October MT: Agenda-setting for the 90s

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HER SON... AND HER LOVER.

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Running Down The Hill

West London's Notting Hill hosts Europe's biggest street festival over August bank holiday. But Carnival has outgrown its traditional boundaries, argues Ferdinand Dennis

I first attended the Notting Hill Carnival 13 years ago. It's close to north Paddington, where I grew up. Getting to the Carnival neighbourhood was a short journey across the Harrow Road and the Half-Penny Steps, which span the Grand Union canal. It was an exciting occasion, full of colour and vitality, evocative of a time and place a world removed from its decaying surroundings. Ladbroke Grove and Notting Hill have, of course, improved environmentally since then. But Carnival still has that foreign feel, even on the most miserable August bank holidays.

My first Carnival was also the first year when the event seriously degenerated into violent clashes between black youngsters and the police. The following year was even worse, and it happened again subsequently. And last year Carnival claimed its first victim. While the young widow still grieves for her husband, the 13-year old controversy over what to do with Carnival has taken a new twist.

For several years after 1975, each Carnival was followed by demands either to ban it or take it off the streets – which for the organisers amounted to the same thing. The emphasis now is on how to make it more orderly. At the forefront of this call are actual Carnival participants, masqueraders and steelband players, many of whom were shocked and appalled at the tragic killing last year. Nobody wants to see that repeated. Carnival is a celebration of life.

Up until recently the call for a more orderly Carnival has come from without: the police and some conservative political figures. But the solutions suggested have been against the spirit of Carnival. Wormwood Scrubs, often mentioned as a possible venue, may be suitable for funfairs, static events, but not for a carnival. But then neither are the streets of Notting Hill and Ladbroke Grove alone.

The Carnival organisers – who are mainly older Caribbean folk – have as usual closed ranks in reaction to criticisms of the event. Yet they have, implicitly, long recognised that it needs more than the streets. In recent years they have made use of several nearby venues, including the Commonwealth Institute, for Carnival shows. Such events enable people to appreciate the spectacular costumes away from the crowds. This audience/performer format is of course particularly European, in contrast to the Caribbean carnival which demands participation. So concessions, however small, have been made.

The organisers' reluctance to loosen their hold over the event (which would hasten the process of adapting Carnival still more closely to the British way of doing things) has many causes. As with so many cultural practices brought from the Caribbean, Carnival's survival has had to be fought for and defended tooth and nail. That it continues today is testimony to the organisers' tenacity and commitment. But Carnival is also lucrative business. Only the innocent or the simple-minded would believe that Carnival organisers are altruistic men and women dedicated to serving the black community.

Yet there is a certain sense in which the Carnival organisers are right to resist the latest attempts to wrest it from their control. At present the event is a boon for many small black businesses – bakeries, bookshops, t-shirt printers, etc. The new spirit of business efficiency (reflecting the influence of a Thatcherite age) demanded by some Carnival participants would not necessarily benefit those small businesses. As I was told recently in a Ladbroke Grove pub: 'At the moment Carnival belongs to us. 'Is not perfect but is our t'ing. What those people talking 'bout is bringing them City boys to run it. Next t'ing you know, we lose Carnival.'

That is certainly one way of seeing it. What is clear is that Carnival has become too big for its founders. Its future requires better organisation, and if that has to come partially from outside the black community, the present organisers might do better to adapt to that inevitability. That way Carnival might grow towards Hyde Park – a far more suitable direction for expansion than the bleak Wormwood Scrubs.

Another problematic feature of Carnival is the tension between the steel bands and the sound systems (which are famous for their wardrobe-sized speakers). The mobile steel bands with their masqueraders require a freedom to move around which is incompatible with the static nature of the sound systems. One is Trinidadian, the other Jamaican. In the Trinidad carnival the problem doesn't exist. But it's very real in the British version. Caribbean people, too, do have their cultural clashes.

Contrary to the conspiracy theories, these clashes are not engineered by external forces. A few Carnivals back, I found myself, along with more than 1,000 people, listening and dancing to a sound system near All Saints Road. The crowd formed a dense mass and getting from one end to the other took ages and even more patience.

Suddenly the sound-system crowd was required to part like the Red Sea to admit a steel band, its masqueraders and followers. Their passing took quite a while. During that time, neither sound system nor steel band was clearly audible. Instead, an unbearable cacophony was created, adding to the discomfiture caused by pressing bodies. Better planning would avoid such situations, which have become all too common at Carnival.

It has been suggested that the sound systems should be reduced. This would be unfortunate because for many Carnival goers – especially British-born ones – Carnival would not be the same without the sound systems. The blockages caused by the sound-systems' audiences are indicative of Carnival needing more space, and it is generally agreed that better planning is needed in the siting of the sounds and routing of the steel bands.

Reflex

Carnival masquerader

However improved the planning of future Carnivals, I do not believe that the stealing and violence of the past will be totally eliminated. They are the result of experiences brought to Carnival, not created there. A society such as ours, which permits the formation of an increasingly large group of people – black and white – with no stake in society, must expect our parties to be spoilt. ●

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LETTERS

Discouraging Topers

The article 'Dry Spells Ahead' by Dr Richard Smith (*MT* August) is far too doom-laden. It is understandable that the medical profession, deeply concerned with the real problem of alcoholism, draws attention to it in a somewhat strident way.

There is no denying that some drinkers – more of spirits than of wine – become addicted, as do consumers of that even more favourite drug, caffeine. But they are a very small minority, and the causes of this addiction often arise from personal or social problems that could be reduced in a fairer society.

Dr Smith tries to frighten us by stating that 'most of the problems associated with alcohol are experienced not by the heaviest drinkers but rather by moderate drinkers'. But he fails to mention that the Colleges of Psychiatrists and Physicians agree that there is a 'sensible limit' of drinking. For men this is the equivalent of 10 pints of beer and 2½ bottles of table wine a week; and two thirds of this for women. This is enough for the vast majority of drinkers.

Then, to reduce drinking he proposes increased taxation, and relates the drop in cigarette smoking to higher excise taxes and not to the well-advertised fact that heavy smokers may develop lung cancer, or the huge anti-smoking publicity and the growing recognition that smoking is anti-social. The 'winos' drink the cheapest stuff, and the last thing the better-off addicts will deprive themselves of is their spirits.

So it would be entirely unreasonable to penalise the estimated 30m wine drinkers in this country for their very social enjoyment of the occasional glass of wine, in order to discourage topers of very different kinds of alcohol.

Dr Smith also recommends a return to the drinking levels of the 50s. Wine drinking then was restricted to the affluent classes.

It was the abandonment by the licensed trade in 1965 of resale price maintenance for brands and the consequent development of supermarket wine-selling that increased the per capita consumption in the 70s to a level that still puts us very low on the international scale.

Alcoholism and the 'safeness' of wine drinking needs to be discussed dispassionately, and not as in the USA where it has reached near-hysterical heights, and is playing into the hands of the reactivated prohibition lobby. ●

Edmund Penning-Rowsell, Oxford

Oppressive Alcohol

Thank you for printing Richard Smith's article on the problems associated with alcohol consumption (*MT* August). There is never enough written on this politically relevant and controversial subject.

The article draws attention to the hypocrisy of this and successive governments in paying lip-service to the 'problem' of alcohol abuse while reaping the substantial rewards this legal, and lethal, drug brings in revenue.

Richard Smith also mentions the continual denial of responsibility on the part of both government and the medical profession for the alarming rise in alcohol consumption and the possibly related rise in crime.

However, no mention is made of the widely-held belief that alcohol can be and is used (as in South Africa, where government-sponsored drinking houses are the norm in black townships) as an instrument of oppression.

Why hasn't the Left seized upon this argument and demanded an immediate end to state control through the promotion and use of alcohol? Would its smoke-filled meeting rooms empty overnight if the use of alcohol were to be officially condemned as being reactionary or even counter-revolutionary?

The coffers of the Tory Party would empty overnight if they were to politely refuse donations from brewers and distillers, the biggest contributors to their cause. Is it necessary for the Left also to succumb to yet another example of institutionalised pressure from capitalist interests?

As two young socialists and recovering alcoholics we recommend that the Left take the lead in condemning this indirect institutionalised oppression. ●

Helen and Paul, London

Sexist Diatribe

I could scarcely believe my eyes! Why on earth is *MT* giving space to that rightwing gutter columnist Julie Burchill? One of *MT's* refreshing strengths is that it challenges and stimulates the Left by engaging in debate with the intelligent or even the eccentric Right. But, whatever the merits of the actual argument of the article about Anne Diamond, it was presented as a sexist diatribe, without wit or humour, by a classic 'super bitch'. As a committed socialist and feminist I find Julie Burchill's venomous style (let alone her views) deeply offensive. If *MT* continues to give her space I will be cancelling my subscription. ●

Raewyn Stone, London

Tragic Talent

With reference to Julie Burchill's 'Close-Up' article (*MT* August) I would like to point out that her description of talent misses an important and often ignored cause-and-effect link. It is true that many talented people do come to have problems and, because many of them handle a great intensity of emotions, these can be devastating.

It is great individual sensitivity, however, which is the root of both the talent and the vulnerability and it *is* possible to use the talent without being vulnerable. It must be said though, that the separation of the two has to be learned and understood.

The idea that talent has to include tragedy is a piece of negative thinking that can be quite harmful. It creates the possibility and encourages the idea that talent can be sought through tragedy. ●

Jeff Mindlin, London

NHS Malaise

The present 'crisis' in the NHS (*MT* July) is ample evidence that something must be done about the health-care sector. The intellectual ground of the current dispute has changed in two quite fundamental ways.

Originally it centred on the valid claims of health care professionals that underfunding was preventing them from doing their jobs properly. However, as a political issue it became a dispute about the poor wages of nurses and, more insidiously, further evidence of the collapse of an unviable bureaucratic organisation.

There is nothing new or unexpected about the troubles in the NHS and the fact that it appears so is a scathing indictment against our political and intellectual order.

I speak with authority, having witnessed cuts in funding at first hand. As a psychiatric nurse in a busy teaching hospital I was privileged to work with a group of people whose work formed the major focus of their lives. Is it surprising that such people will voice their discontent when they no longer gain satisfaction from doing a difficult job well?

It is galling that those who ignored demographic and technological changes, and systematically starved the NHS of funds, now gain merit from its malaise, for their notion that our country can no longer afford the Health Service in its current form. ●

Nick Freemantle, Leeds

Left And Green Dialogue

While appreciating that the purpose of Fred Steward's article was to encourage debate, he has misrepresented the existing level of dialogue. His article could have been more positive had it mentioned groups who have sought resolutions to the ideological differences between Greens and socialists.

Fred Steward itemised well the difficulties of the Left but was implicitly too kind to the environmental movement and omitted the necessary questions Greens must ask themselves. For example, how strongly is our concern for the environment based on a fundamental concern for the people living within it?

A major step forward for the Greens would be to broaden their definition of what is meant by the term 'environment'. So that the term can come to mean not only what is happening to the South American rainforests, but also what is happening to people in their place of work. Environmental concern would become less abstract (and the limiting preserve of middle-class protest) and more accessible to the traditional Left. ●

Andrew Simms, Essex

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LETTERS

Collective Provision

I was pleasantly surprised to read 'Citizen Gains' (*MT* August). There are three areas of policy where the Left will have to show its mettle if it wants to convince voters that it can keep its promises of improving public provision.

Firstly, recognising that the unemployed need a programme of retraining and confidence-building together with decent levels of payment. If they served the community by working, training or receiving education, the political argument over the need to raise levels of benefit paid would be that much easier to win.

Secondly, one year of national community service for all men and women over 18. This would ensure that young people gave something of themselves to the community in return for improved opportunities in education and training.

Thirdly, nothing has contributed more to undermining confidence in the public services than periods of industrial strife.

The right to strike is a basic civil right but so is the right to have medical treatment, your child taught at school etc. Public service employers suffer little direct discomfort from strike action. The innocent third party, the service users, suffer the most.

The only solution is to ensure that employers offer decent pay and conditions, that service users accept that they will have to pay a reasonable rate of tax and that employees forego the right to strike in return for index-linked pay and favourable working conditions.

Many on the Left cannot stomach such proposals. They fail to understand that collective rights do sometimes imply a limitation of individual freedom of action. ●

Chris Mularczyk, London

Violence Against Children

Beatrix Campbell and Stephen Sedley (*MT* July) have denied whole aspects of children's experience by the extraordinary assertion that *all* types of child abuse are 'predominantly, overwhelmingly committed by males'.

They have equated the circumstances of child sexual abuse with the entire range of abusive behaviour which adults, including women, exhibit towards children. In the case of sexual abuse, it *is* true that men constitute the vast majority of abusers and that women are often scapegoated and held responsible for it. However, it is not by extension true that women are incapable of violent and abusive behaviour towards children, nor that the problem of masculinity is at the root of all abuse.

While a feminist analysis of male sexual violence is crucial to understanding sexual abuse it does not provide an explanation for all forms of abuse. Whose interests are being served by this denial of women's role as abusers and the suggestion that only men are capable of 'passing on' the abuse they may have suffered as children?

Both the Left and the women's movement have failed to take into account an age-based analysis, outside the paradigms of sex and class, which sees children as an oppressed group and understands that abuse, as highlighted by social service intervention, constitutes one extreme of a spectrum of oppression.

Evidence of this abounds throughout society, not only in social work files. Children are denied personhood by a wealth of legal, social and economic means. In all the institutions 'for' children: schools, children's homes, nurseries etc, and in public places, you can witness contemptuous attitudes of adults towards children: blatant threats and humiliations, thoughtless and often vicious physical attacks.

Assault against children (by the parent or parental substitute) is legal in Britain provided the punishment is 'reasonable'. The vast majority of adults collude with the status of children as someone else's private property. We may be shocked and upset at the reported cases of abuse but we don't intervene when someone is bashing a child in public.

Feminists have quite rightly criticised Freud for his transformation of real sexual abuse into fantasy. Women must not do the same by denying our own capacity for violence against children. We need to widen, not narrow, the debate and acknowledge that women's and children's interests are not necessarily the same. Between them, exists a relationship of power. ●

Wendy Ayotte, London

Two-Sided Technology

What is the connection between marxism and bicycles? In your last issue five out of 50 pages contained at least one reference to cycling, and 25% of your colour pages consisted of a picture of a bike.

I'm not familiar with the entire Marx corpus but have yet to find a mention of two-wheel technology. Now, Freud on sexism and bicycles would be a different matter . . . have you considered changing the name to *Cyclism Today?* ●

John Potter, Essex

Gentlemen Please

Following Heather Hunt's question: 'Does *MT* see feminism as central to the socialist project?' we have David Marquand spelling out what a successful anti-Thatcherite force must look like: 'A marriage, between Thomas Paine and William Morris' (*MT* July).

The 'honourably converging' gentlemen seem to be another unimaginative solution. Looks like Ye Olde Ying-Yang-Jung baloney to me. Not that any 'marriage' would be a better substitute but the homosocially affirming paradigm holds little interest to women, feminists or any true radical. Gender and sexual politics are central issues but to place (again!) two men at the centre of the rebuilding process is ludicrous. Shackled to the same past David Marquand offers a critique of, it shouldn't be surprising that feminists – indeed women – don't get a look in. ●

Kate Pickford, Japan

Balanced Journal Of The Left

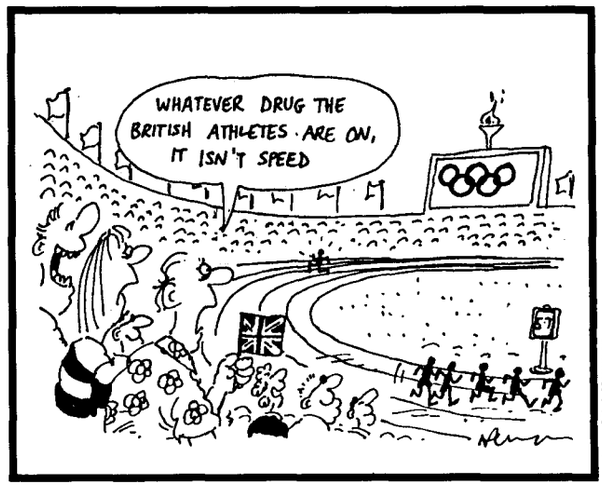
I was introduced to British left-wing weekly papers in 1943 in the Middle East, my first 'bible' was *New Statesman And Nation*. In comparison with that paper, *Marxism Today* is the most advanced paper of the Left. It doesn't preach, it takes up all the issues which face us and the young generation from personal, domestic, foreign, class, race, family issues etc, it enlightens us, gives us a new insight into matters affecting our lives under Thatcherism and often tells us how to cope with it. Not much sectarian about *MT*! The analysis is often two-sided, one doesn't have to be a marxist with theoretical knowledge, and it meets a wide range of opinions.

When I see my comrades carrying *MT* at Labour Party meetings or hear them quoting it, I swell with pride that I too am a reader! ●

Gina Harrison, Brighton

Correction In 'Moscow In Motion' (*MT*, Aug) a gremlin altered Roy Medvedev's explanation of the 'Ligachev trend' (p 14 col 3). That trend wants restructuring, *without* (not *with*) democratisation. Apologies for any confusion. ●

Editorial Note: We welcome your letters to add to discussion. Please send them to *MT* Letters Page, 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY. Brevity means you are more likely to be published. We reserve the right to cut. ●



Cartoon: Nick Newman

PS

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TUC Crisis
Danger: Flying Sparks

The EETPU Electricians' Union is on the verge of expulsion from the TUC. On the eve of the historic Trade Union Congress, outspoken EETPU leader **Eric Hammond** talks to *Charlie Leadbeater* about prospects and possibilities for his union outside the TUC

Do you think you'll be expelled from the TUC at congress, or do you think your suspension will be continued? Would you prefer a clean break, or would you prefer to keep some sort of arm's length relationship with the TUC?
Because we've seen the suspension as a regretable separation, we would prefer to be in continued suspension, in the hope that the TUC might come to accept that these matters ought to take into account the views of the members concerned, the people in employment in the places in dispute, namely Christian Salveson and Orion. Because we believe that's an inevitable development, we'd sooner be suspended. I don't know what will be the outcome in September, because it's clear, as with any other matter of difference in the movement, that if one is for suspension, another group are for expulsion. I suppose it could develop into one of those silly left/right issues, where you are only *bona fide* left if you're for expulsion: they just want people to make an example of.

It must be quite likely that it will be expulsion given the way the TUC votes over Wapping have gone over the last two years. But let's assume it's continued suspension. Now, if you're in suspension you're likely to have recruitment rows with TUC unions, and a number of areas where bitterness could grow between you and the TUC. Isn't it likely that temporary suspension could become permanent?
Well, that's an orthodox view. I don't think there is an army of zealots on either side of the argument out there willing to have a go at other unions' memberships. What they want to do is get on with their job, as they see it, of representing their people's interests. If you make it much more of a hassle, you'll have people walking away from trade unionism anyway. The irony is that the issue, that of honouring Bridlington and its agreements, is dead immediately we're outside the TUC. There's nothing I want to do to prevent people leaving us who've said, 'Look, for political reasons or dissatisfaction with service, I want to leave the union, I want to go into another union'. They're free to go, I've got no Bridlington to stop them. But neither have the TUC unions got Bridlington to stop members coming towards us. But on the sheer mathematics of the thing, presuming there's 5% of members in any union that are dissatisfied at any one time for a number of different reasons: that is 5% of 330,000 EETPU members that TUC unions can get at, and I've got 5% of 9m to get at! Even if we only do half as well, we're going to be pretty well ahead of the field. So essentially what I'm saying is that people out there don't want that sort of hassle. And the net result of any hassle is they'll all be walking away from trade unionism.

Do you see this as an historic split in the trade union movement, after which working people have a choice: two different kinds of trade unionism, two different cultures of unionism? Or do you see it as less than that: as a period through which you'll have to go outside the TUC, while the TUC changes, and you eventually come back into a different kind of TUC? Which is it going to be: choice or, in the end, a reformed TUC?
It could be either, that's not in our hands to determine. I feel that if our suspension or expulsion goes on for any length of time, then it will develop into the former. But I can't believe that the TUC general council will fail to see the logic of what I've said: that Bridlington is dead. Let's take, for example, the TGWU complaint about the AEU's Coca-Cola deal. If they go through the same process as we did, the AEU would be standing in the same position as we are now and having to choose between giving up the agreement or being suspended. Now the TUC really couldn't survive that situation. As a consequence, the Special Review Body report, with its restrictions on single-union deals, is dead almost before it's born. Because, to put it at its lowest, they can't put an obstacle in the way of an affiliated union which is not in the way of a suspended union.

Isn't it the case that actually underlying this is a difference in culture: that you are for a unionism which is about unions competing for different kinds of services almost unconstrained, which runs in the face of TUC unionism and particularly the big general unions? Isn't that really the basis of it rather than the technical details?
You probably put it clearer than we do ourselves. I mean we've not got some grand new strategy. We do what seems to be sensible on a day-to-day basis. Out of that something seems to have developed, a new style of trade unionism. Commentators outside the scene dignify it by some strategy that's involved, but that's just the way it has come out. Meanwhile the TUC is digging in and staying in the trenches of Bridlington, which was originally intended to look after the rights of unions. But, in the main it's looked after the rights of bigger unions, the general workers' unions rather than anybody else.

But what you seem to be saying is that your condition, if you like, for going back into the TUC, is that you should be free to offer any kind of agreement that you or your members want, to virtually any company; and the best way for the TUC to operate is without Bridlington altogether, and just have a much freer kind of competition.
I'm not saying without any agreement, without any provision or restriction. What I'm saying is that the restriction should be based on what the members concerned want. When a group of members want to leave a union then we really ought to let them opt out – in fact we've never been able to stop them. If a group of members want a particular type of agreement then, providing they agree that by a majority, well that's how it should be. The TUC has failed to allow individual choice, the individual voice is not even taken into account.

Basically you regret leaving the TUC, and once out it could go either way: there might be ways of coming back in if it leads to changes, but it might become a long-lasting split. Let's look at both those possibilities. One way back in – and one important thing for you – is your proposed merger with the AEU engineering union. You need that merger, because you'll be competing with some very big general unions. But there are a number of difficulties about it, some disquiet in the AEU, a lot of issues to be cleared up.

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Would there have to be a vote about whether the new merged union was going to be part of the TUC, and do you see the merger as a way of getting back into the TUC fold?
I don't see it as a way of getting back in, but it could be that the new union would be affiliated to the TUC. That's a question which I know bothers my colleagues in the AEU. But the reality of the matter is that the two disputed agreements would still exist, and instead of being in the industrial portfolio of the EETPU it would be incorporated in the new portfolio. If everything was unchanged, the TUC would say, 'you must obey the disputes rulings'. But of course, the thing wouldn't be the same. In 1989 the agreements will have been in existence for some time, established memberships would be there, and simply to say 'well, a year ago we told you to withdraw, and now you do it' to a union which would be as big as any inside the TUC, I don't think that would be practical politics. There are all sorts of ways that people are bound to get round that, including asking the members concerned: are they satisfied with the EETPU? We would stand by the verdict of the members on whether they are satisfied with their agreement.

Would there have to be a vote of the entire EETPU and AEU membership on whether the new merged union should be part of the TUC?
We wouldn't press that the new union, in its amalgamation document, should be outside the TUC. I think it would be accepted that the new union would apply. It would mean the TUC having to take an attitude to the application. I think that's the formal way of starting, the new union applying for membership. But we would be taking into the new union a decision of our members with regard to what we see as interference from the TUC, and the AEU would have some form of decision from their national committee against the interference from the TUC.

So your position relies on the AEU. The key way that you could get back into the TUC is the threat of the AEU leaving along with you . . .
. . . and seeing some amendment then of the way the problems between unions are dealt with.

Now let's assume that you're staying out. One of the things which is going to determine whether you can really survive outside the TUC is employers' responses to what you would now have to offer. Isn't it the case that actually, in the long run, the only people that benefit from this division within the unions are employers?
Any apprehension I have about that future is not about our members or people wanting to join us. It's over employers giving in to intimidation about existing agreements we have where there are small groups of members. But what has impressed me most over this period is the cohesion, the integration of the union. This suspension can get a momentum of its own. Out there the thing will start to roll. I'm not fearful of our members. And paradoxically, given that we've got that momentum, that support, the employers better look out.

Will you start approaching employers on multi-union sites, to turn them into single-union sites?
We have no such plans or desires. Now we've brought in an element of choice so far as union membership is concerned, I cannot stop people walking away from us. But at the same time the other side of that coin is that the door is open here to anyone who wants to come in. Now if we get a sizeable block of members, who of their own volition want to come to us and exercise that choice, then we have to seek proper representational rights for them.

Would you go into any major projects like the Channel Tunnel? Would you target those sorts of things for possible single-union deals outside your traditional areas?
Yes, we would certainly be after that. It's a critical area, and I think yes, we'd have a chance.

Let's look at the other side of it then. How many members do you expect to lose? You will lose the left of the union, or a substantial part of it. Would that disappoint you?
They are still all our children. I'd say they're erring ones. There is a place for a wide spectrum of opinion in the union and the voice of the Left has always been expressed, so I would regret that going out. The group that say they're going to leave estimate that 5,000 to 20,000 will go with them. I think that those who leave will be more than compensated for by those who want to join us. I don't mean by taking other unions' members, but the door will be open. But I believe we will be able to fashion an appeal to the biggest group of workers in Great Britain: those who don't belong to a union at all.

Isn't there a danger that throughout industry, where your members are in a small minority, you'll just get squeezed? Partly because employers will come under pressure from the big general unions to say 'Look, just get rid of these people'.
Employers will come in for intimidation and there is no accounting for the cowardice of some employers. We're not in business for the convenience of fools and we do believe that our stand is for very good reasons. Now, some may well decide that this is the way they are going to do it. Because they've been told by TUC unions, they will not sit down with us, they may exclude us. And OK, some places we'll lose, some places we might hold firm, but I don't think it's going to look very well with the employers to be seen to be doing down this independent union. We do have some support out there among the general public who happen to be voters as well.

Hammond: Prepared to go it alone

'I think that those who leave will be more than compensated for by those who want to join us'

You have talked about possible mergers with other unions, non-TUC affiliates. Can we expect any of those in the next six months to a year? For instance a merger with the UDM?
No, I wouldn't see a merger with the UDM as on the cards in any short space of time. Like I said, if the estrangement carries on for a long period, all these things could come into play. What we have been doing for some time is to seek, rather successfully, to embrace a number of staff and management associations and give them an independent place within the union under a looser umbrella.

That can clearly grow. But what about your future relationship with larger unions outside the TUC? Won't the logic of events lead you over time towards some sort of second confederation, however loose, of unions outside the TUC?
It could but to some extent we've kept these discussions very cool, simply because as you referred to earlier, this makes it that much harder to make our peace with the TUC. As that is our medium-term objective, we do not want

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'We're certainly not going to walk away from the Labour Party. I don't think the leadership of the Labour Party wants us away'

Glossary Of A Crisis

EETPU Dispute: The TUC told the EETPU to withdraw from two single-union strike-free agreements with Christian Salveson and Orion. The EETPU's refusal to comply led to its suspension from the TUC in June and the possibility of expulsion at TUC congress in September.

Bridlington: The Bridlington principles are the TUC procedures for regulating inter-union conflict over competition for members and recruitment. The EETPU has been suspended under Bridlington for signing the agreements at Christian Salveson and Orion.

Coca-Cola: The AEU engineering union recently signed a single-union agreement for a Coca-Cola bottling plant under construction at Wakefield. The TGWU is the main production union at that company.

Special Review Body: The SRB was set up by the 1987 TUC congress and consists of 21 general secretaries. It will report to the 1988 congress. The wide-ranging report covers services to members, recruitment, union structure and a range of other issues. Its most contentious element is a proposed code to regulate union competition for single-union agreements. It says a union must not conclude an agreement in exchange for recognition which includes binding arbitration. So it would make it very difficult for the EETPU to pursue its strategy of signing single-union no-strike agreements on greenfield sites.

Binding Arbitration: In strike-free agreements the last stage of any dispute is referred to arbitration compulsorily. The arbitrators' award is binding on both employer and union. Most agreements say that there will be no industrial action while a dispute is being processed. Thus the agreement is strike-free: there can be no recourse to a strike, only to arbitration.

AEU Merger: The EETPU, which has about 330,000 members, and the AEU engineering union, with about 800,000 members, have been in merger talks for some time. A merged union would be the second-largest in the country. Although Eric Hammond has formed a close relationship on the TUC general council with Bill Jordan, the AEU president, there is some disquiet in the AEU over the merger. There are several obstacles in the way of the merger. The AEU elects officials, the EETPU does not. The EETPU has a ban on members of the Communist Party, the AEU does not. Eric Hammond said the EETPU's restrictions on Communist Party members would not form part of the merged union's constitution. The AEU has a system of district committees, which is not mirrored in the EETPU. Most importantly, there would be considerable opposition from the Left and Right of the AEU to withdrawing from the TUC. The AEU offers single-union agreements but not strike-free deals.●

to do anything that can get in the way of it. So I'll give you two good reasons why we don't rush to embrace everybody outside the TUC in some structural unity. It may make it hard for a rapprochement with the TUC, and secondly, it does look rather daft to have got into difficulties in one confederation and then go along to another one.

When would you have to make a decision: it's been long enough, we haven't succeeded in getting back, we are out for good, we had better go through with it?

I think those decisions will be made for us . . .

How long do you think it will take – a year, less than a year?

If expulsion is chosen in September, then that, I think, will be a clear signal to our union that the independent road is the one which we're going to be on for a long time. If the decision was for suspension and the worst sort of raiding of members, then that too would signal to us that we had to get to battle-stations. But if it was the sort of suspension that we're enduring at the moment, I think we would hold back and be looking for the opening which would find a way back. So there's those three possibilities, two of which would lead us away from the TUC.

A lot of people focus on the ETU as a modernising, right union. But isn't a lot of this problem actually to do with the culture of the ETU, that basically it's an awkward union? It would be awkward outside, it doesn't want to enter alliances or shoulder the responsibility of alliances with other unions outside the TUC. And inside, you haven't really created the political momentum on the right wing of the TUC to solidify your position.

We've simply done our thing, and if other people go along with it, then OK, but we've never really sought to be the centre of any mood or movement. Now, it might be as you say, that we are an awkward lot – I've said it myself at times – but I think our differences with the TUC and with other unions have got more of a basis than the character defects of myself or 330,000 of my members!

Trade unions in the main still regard the branch as the power base. That was great when everybody went along to their branch: like my local Deptford branch minutes from some years ago. In 1914 they had 32 members belonging to the branch, 29 attended, and there were two apologies. The branch then was a really democratic forum. In the first world war and afterwards the shop steward comes in and attendance at branches withers away. Now most measurements say that less than 1% of members attend branches. But the branches still have devolved upon them all the powers that they had in the days when most people went along. The 1% – I don't blame them – are inevitably 57 varieties of the Left, who put forward their view and out of it comes some expression from the branch about what the 5,000 members want. That's been the reason for the great divide between the ordinary Joe who is also a voter and who therefore also starts moving away from the Labour Party electorally; the great divide between the leadership and the membership.

We had the rigging of our ballot for the post of general secretary in the early 60s; and the traumatic experience of the union being turned over, overnight, and a new leadership coming in. But the same people were still running the branches, the activists. There's only one other answer: that's to build a relationship with the members. You have to have a balloting system, asking members what they want. In all the issues that have faced us since then, the leadership of the union, confronted with a problem, have had to say, 'What do the members think?' My colleagues round the TUC general council, I don't know what they are thinking, it's what their activists are thinking. This divide between activists and members is why we find ourselves in this difficulty now. That's the historical reason for it all, not nastiness or awkwardness on our part, just that we are listening to a different tune.

But it's still quite a centralised union as well. There is a relationship between the leadership and the membership, but the middle tier of democracy in the union isn't very strong. And isn't that basically the image of the future of unionism that you're setting out? That is a much more effective, managerial and efficient leadership which has a direct relationship with the individual members, but collectivism of unions in the old sense of branches or whatever is dying.

Yes. But I don't see things frozen as they are now. Having given members this sort of influence and power, true then only need to express it every so often through a vote, but that will grow and then you'll have a genuinely representative and influential union.

When the new union legislation comes in, that will make all the general unions more like you in that sense, and so your criticism against them will be less sharp,

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less justified.
Certainly to see the future ahead of us with the legislation applying, that seems to be so. It's sad to me that we haven't taken a more active part in trying to shape and advocate changes, but rather we've had to have these pressed upon us. The Tories have done a cracking job in taking away the ground we ought to stand on and that's the ground of the individual members' rights. Instead of the unions saying, 'well, you can keep that rotten Toryism', let's give them something more.

Let me ask you about the Labour Party side of it. If you're expelled or suspended from the TUC, on the first day of the Labour Party conference you are going to face people saying, 'What are these jackals doing sitting here? They should be out.' How will you respond to that?
We're certainly not going to walk away from the Labour Party. I don't think the leadership of the Labour Party wants us away. For a number of reasons: I suppose the small amount of money we've contributed is one; secondly our vote can usually be relied on for sensible causes, and with the TGWU being unpredictable there may be a few people wooing us for our vote for the executive this year. Some unusual approaches will be made! But beyond that I think it will be a disaster politically for the Labour Party to say, 'Well, here's a problem the TUC have got, the EETPU haven't offended us but we've got to throw them out because the TUC have thrown them out.' For them to do that, I think, would be yet another few steps backwards in public esteem. So as a *political* move, they won't want to do it.

'The Special Review Body report, with its restrictions on single-union deals, is dead almost before it's born'

Would you challenge that in court?
I don't think that ultimately such a decision would be taken, but we would challenge it in the courts if there was a decision by the national executive committee to exclude us.

After a decade of union decline, most unions are now reporting membership increases, we've got the TUC package of financial services, the credit card and all the rest of it . . .
Quite smart, because you know, when we launched it three or four years ago, what a load of odium we got from TUC affiliates.

So the movement is picking up, and in a lot of ways it's coming your way. You're far from the only union that's signing single-union deals or strike-free deals. Why choose this time to break with the TUC, when the movement just seems to be getting itself together?
I don't disagree with your description of the way things are going. It's not our choice to be suspended. These rulings against us have gradually become more restrictive. What we were faced with this year were decisions of a completely new order. One at Christian Salveson told us to exclude all the members we had there and never mind that they had never belonged to another union before. So we clearly got the signal, from that and the Orion decision, that the TUC view – or the general workers unions' views as expressed through the TUC – was that: better there be no union and no union membership and no agreement than it be the EETPU. That was a clear signal to us they were out to do us. So we either stood on the ground of those two agreements or we accepted them meekly and we're in a weaker position then to deal with what the next one was going to be.

Finally looking down the track, what's your feeling about what you'll be doing in four years' time? Where do you think you'll be? Do you think there's going to be an enormous industrial and political realignment? Or is this all going to be a flash in the pan and in a year's time the TUC will be back together again?
Well, we're not going to be a flash in the pan. To look forward four years: it's very difficult. There is a movement towards more pragmatic commonsense attitudes inside the TUC, I think that will lead them to doing what's necessary for us to find some way back in. So if you are saying where will we be in four years time, I would say yes, this gulf would have been bridged. Hopefully that would mean that the Labour Party itself would be in a better shape. ●

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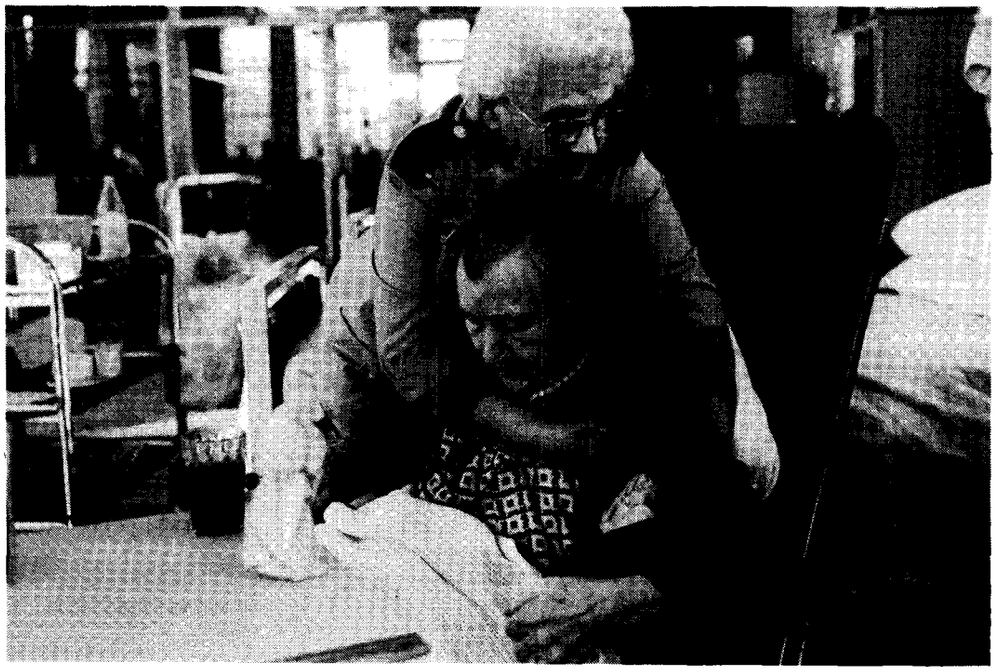

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TUC Crisis

Thoroughly Modern Movement

The GMB prefers these days to be called 'Britain's General Union'. Its leader **John Edmonds** is a fierce moderniser but equally vehement critic of EETPU-style 'business unionism'. He is also a key TUC general council member. He discusses here with *Charlie Leadbeater* the battle for the labour movement's future

Do you think that the EETPU will be expelled or suspended at congress and which would you prefer?
Of all the possible options the one that I, and I think most trade unionists, would prefer is for the EETPU to change its mind, and to decide in spite of everything to keep the rules as they were pledged to do, and to stay within the TUC. I'm bound to say that is extremely unlikely. If they don't change their minds, there seems to be little alternative to expulsion. That is very sad and it will be very damaging for the trade union movement.

Outside the TUC, the electricians will be free to sign whatever agreements they like, with whatever companies; and dissatisfied members from a range of unions could join them. Isn't it quite likely that they will become an increasing thorn in the side of the TUC, and they could survive and possibly flourish outside?
I doubt very much whether the EETPU in anything like its present form could flourish outside the TUC. I've no doubt that an organisation could survive, based on dissident trade union members, a particular right-wing political philosophy and a policy of giving the employers the benefit of the doubt in any argument between members and employers. I'm not sure I would describe that as a trade union, but there is a market for that sort of organisation. The EETPU at the moment is an authentic trade union. It has within it a lot of good union members who have committed themselves to the trade union movement over many years. There is no doubt the EETPU will lose a great number of those members. They just will not want to be outside the mainstream of the trade union movement. The EETPU will pick up some dissident members elsewhere, but I think the numbers will be rather small; they will lose that core of trade union activists on whom every union depends. The EETPU is going to be an irritant or an inconvenience, but that's all it's going to be. Having shed its members who believe in mainstream trade union ideology it will be looking for people of a very different ilk.

If the EETPU does go, it's unlikely that they will come back within a three-year period. Once the governing body of a large organisation has made a decision as dramatic, I would say as catastrophic, as this, they feel under an enormous obligation to prove the correctness of that decision to their members. I think the nature of the EETPU executive in recent years is that they don't change their minds too easily: they will sustain a great deal of damage before they even begin to think that they may have taken the wrong step. But during that period, of course, the trade union movement is going to change dramatically in its structure and make-up.

In general there are two ways the EETPU could be brought back within the TUC. One is that the TUC changes and this persuades the EETPU that its future lies inside it. The other is that life is so painful outside, that it is forced back in. Take the second of those options. Other things being equal, the EETPU will survive outside the TUC. So in one way or another, won't you have to launch a recruitment drive against it, to make life so painful that it can't bear not being in the TUC?
The situation is extremely unstable and the likelihood is that if expulsion takes place in September, then sometime before the end of this year a membership battle will start somewhere. If that happens it is likely to get fiercer and fiercer because there are many people in the mainstream of the trade union movement who are keen to punish the EETPU. I think that's a self-destructive attitude, but a lot of people feel it. Now it may be that by the middle of '89 there is some way of living together, where people in various industries have suffered enough, where the EETPU has been squeezed out of industries in which it has a minority interest, or – where it's got a strong interest – other unions perhaps will decide to find a way of living with that. I don't know, but that seems a likely outcome.

What I'm worried about is that the main task of the trade union movement in the late-80s is to recruit new members, in those parts of industry where trade unionism is weak and where people desperately need trade union representation. This internal battle will reduce that recruitment effort: we will waste resources and energy that should be better-used.

Will there be, or should there be, moves to exclude the EETPU from local joint negotiating committees, where its ability to represents its members depends on being able to work with TUC unions? Because that's an obvious lever to use against it.
There are going to be many examples where trade union activists, local union officials, are going to demand that the EETPU is excluded. If there is the regrettable but sad membership battle that many people are predicting, where the EETPU continues to take a very high profile in attacking other unions, then it's very difficult to work jointly with people who are telling you on a day-to-day basis that you're entirely wrong in all your political judgement, entirely wrong in all your industrial strategies and that you are pretty unwholesome people anyway. It's a bit difficult to make common cause with the people who are saying those things. The pressures are going to be to isolate the EETPU. Now, I hope, I trust, that we can move slowly if we're going in that direction at all, because I still think the potential damage to the movement is so heavy that we ought to give opportuntities for tenth, eleventh, twelfth thoughts – even the hundredth reconsideration. That I'm sure will be regarded by many of my colleagues as wimpish, an indication that really there's no stomach for the battle. In a sense there isn't, because the battle is going to hurt trade union members and we ought to be doing more useful things for our people. An internal battle, a civil war, is the last thing any of us want.

So basically you would prefer to see some sort of working relationship which will allow some room for reconsideration?
Yes. We actually have to live together as well as working together.

But it is a gamble. For what could be established outside the TUC is an entirely different culture of unionism with an

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entirely different ideological and political orientation which, in the long run, will only benefit employers.

There is an enormous gamble here, but I think the gamble is being taken by the EETPU. The TUC in the end has to concentrate on its own survival and it cannot allow an organisation to break rules that have been decided jointly. Now if, once it is outside the TUC, the EETPU gains some real momentum – and I don't mean a certain amount of hype from parts of the media – that will only come about as a result of a failure by the TUC to capture the high ground and to demonstrate its worth to working people as a whole.

The GMB is putting to the TUC in September suggestions to achieve a limited number of important objectives. We should forget a bit about influencing the grand sweep of history and instead concentrate on specific targets like, for instance, establishing a proper database on all health and safety issues, so that the TUC becomes the resource centre on health and safety for the whole union movement. The TUC should be doing a lot of work on labour markets to provide the basic research for trade union organisational efforts. It should have a development fund to back unions' organisational efforts in very difficult recruitment areas. And there should be a proper TUC programme for explaining trade unionism in schools and colleges using modern communications techniques to give a presentable and convincing picture of what trade unionism is about.

The GMB over recent years has been keen to limit TUC objectives to some obviously worthwhile and achievable things and to leave out quite a lot of the bullshit. I think that if the TUC proceeds on that basis then membership of it will be seen to be very valuable. The TUC can fund and provide a real support for the whole trade union movement on health and safety, recruitment and education. The EETPU can't compete with that.

That is a question the EETPU has raised very clearly: what is the point of being a member of the TUC anymore? The TUC, as it stands, probably doesn't do very much for quite a few unions. Isn't part of the reason why the EETPU is able to split off in this way that the TUC hasn't laid out a vision of a modern trade union movement which can overcome the EETPU's attempt to monopolise the imagery of 'the modern union'?

Yes, I wouldn't put it quite like that, but I accept a large part of that argument. There is still a great deal of hankering after the days when the TUC was welcomed into the corridors of power. And at some stage in the future that easy access to Whitehall may again be the main role of the TUC. But even if that happens, other things will still need to be done to spread trade unionism into areas where it has been weak; to ensure that trade unionism is attractive in the service trades, is attractive to women, is attractive to people working in small groups rather than the traditional great industrial combines. There has to be an appeal to that world, those people: a very clear TUC vision of where it's going. Now, my own union – and others, such as MSF – do have a very clear idea of where we are going. Our ideas may not coincide perfectly, but many of them run in parallel. But what the TUC hasn't been able to do in recent years is bring that all together in some vision of trade unionism.

Edmonds: Keen to limit TUC objectives

Do you think the Special Review Body report has settled the question of single-union, strike-free agreements?

God, I hope so, because we have spent so much time looking sideways at the issue. The argument should never have been about single-union deals because every trade union in the TUC signs single-union deals: that in itself is uncontroversial. We've all done those deals as a very sensible way of handling industrial relations and reducing inter-union competition on new sites. But on existing sites where there are three unions, it is unreasonable to say to the members of two, 'Sorry, you must go and join the third' – particularly when it's the employer deciding which of them should represent the workforce.

'The argument should never have been about single-union deals because every trade union in the TUC signs single-union deals'

As far as no-strike deals go, in the public utilities we have had unilateral arbitration for years, and it prevents the worst type of sporadic industrial dispute in a major public utility. But at the same time it gives people an opportunity of arguing the case in a very robust way, and if necessary, of taking industrial action. But the problem with the EETPU is that it puts together a package which it thinks is attractive to the *employer* and if that package isn't attractive then the union offers something else, all the time saying to the employer: 'Well if that isn't what you want, tell us what you do want and I'm sure we can meet it'. It's that approach which is unacceptable.

But isn't there a problem on greenfield sites where there is no workforce in existence, and so no-one to consult? Isn't

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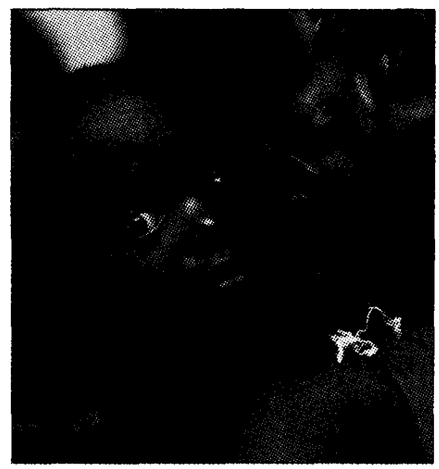

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'The battle is going to hurt trade union members and we ought to be doing more useful things for our people'

Future Under Review

The Special Review Body of 21 general secretaries was established by the 1987 Trade Union Congress to draw up a report on future union strategy. It was given a wide-ranging brief covering financial services, the role of the TUC in promoting unionism, and recruitment organisation.

But its initial task was to examine union competition over recruitment and recognition at new manufacturing plants being built ('greenfield' sites). For many in the TUC it was a way to bring some order into increasingly cut-throat competition over single-union, strike-free deals, and to establish a set of rules to regulate competition. The EETPU saw it as a further infringement of its freedom to sign these agreements.

The document to be presented to September's congress was drawn up by John Monks, the TUC's deputy general secretary, and one of the sharpest thinkers in the union movement.

The report is one of the best recent surveys of changing pressures on unions: from new patterns of employment to employers' new industrial relations strategies. It notes that with membership declining or growing less strongly than the overall growth in employment, union competition for recruitment is becoming both more intense and more widespread. In addition, employers establishing new sites are generally only recognising a single union.

The report considers several changes to union structure to help ease competitive tensions: the creation of industrial unions; amalgamations; a rule which would give a union a year to recruit at a greenfield site before opening it up to competition. It rejects these options and recommends a new code of conduct to regulate the signing of these agreements. The report says single-union agreements are here to stay. It says strike-free arrangements are also useful and widely used. But what it is opposed to is unions giving up the right to strike to win recognition from an employer.

The report says: 'On no-strike arrangements, the TUC's interest is in seeing unions not appearing to be engaged in a Dutch auction with employers when competing for recognition by giving away the ultimate lawful rights of unions to call out members on official strike.'

This is enshrined in a clause to be incorporated in the code of conduct which reads: 'Unions, when making recognition agreements, must not make agreements which specifically remove, or are designed to remove, the basic democratic lawful rights of a trade union to take industrial action in advance of recruitment of members and without consulting them. If faced with an employer insisting on such procedures the union should consult the TUC.'

Beyond that the report goes on to outline some much more interesting ideas for the TUC's future role in recruitment strategies through providing a local labour market information service for unions, helping with recruitment drives in new towns, providing advice with the recruitment of special target groups of members, and educational work to promote trade unionism among the young. These themes, as well as TUC plans for financial services to members, will be explored in the second phase of the SRB's work, following congress. ●

The *Special Review Body – First Report* is available from the TUC, Great Russell St, London WC1, price £2.50.

the TUC going to have to come round to some mechanism to allow workers a choice over agreements, even on a greenfield site?

Yes, there's no doubt about this at all. The EETPU is keen to push everybody else into false positions for its own tactical advantage. Yes, it's a good idea, where there are a number of unions trying to recruit the workforce in a particular establishment, to give a choice to the working people. But not, as is the case at the moment, to the employer. In many countries, the fact that the choice should be the choice of the employee, rather than the employer, is enshrined in law.

How much of a risk do you think that is, that the AEU might leave the TUC along with the EETPU?

They've repeatedly said no at the highest level: in private as well as in public. They are not going to leave the TUC. If the EETPU tries to use the AEU to fight the EETPU's battles, relations between the two unions are bound to worsen. I think a lot of people in the AEU would resent being used as a kind of battering ram on behalf of the EETPU executive.

Do you think the EETPU should be excluded from the Labour Party?

I think we should follow the same principle in the party as we have so far in the TUC. That's to take the thing steadily stage by stage. If the EETPU chooses to be expelled from the TUC then I think the Labour Party national executive committee should immediately begin its own enquiry about whether it is feasible for the EETPU to continue to be affiliated. Legal advice will have to be taken. But there will also have to be soundings among the trade unions and among the constituency parties, because in the end the people who can join the Labour Party or any other party are those who are acceptable to its existing members.

But I don't think there's any point in precipitate action. A lot of speeches by EETPU leaders revolve around the argument that there's some grand conspiracy working against their union. If precipitate attempts are made to expel the EETPU from the Labour Party I think it would just fuel those images of conspiracy.

Finally, is this an historic split in the TU movement, or is it part of something less than that, a temporary separation which will be resolved after a few years?

I think it is a splintering. We're talking about a union of something over 300,000 members, which has been losing members pretty regularly for a number of years now, splitting away from an organisation of over *nine million*. What I fear is this. The EETPU has a particular view of what trade unions ought to do. Some of those ideas are good, a number of them are not very good. But they are all packaged together with some very unattractive ribbon.

The sad thing might be that the TUC will be so keen to dissociate itself from the EETPU that it will move away from those good ideas that are already part of our own culture and our own activity, for the sake of proving ourselves different. We may even, if we're not careful, fit ourselves into exactly that stereotype that Eric Hammond has drawn for us. That is, backward-looking people who can't come to terms with the modern world. The irony is that a craft union like the EETPU has no place in the modern world. That is the basic problem that Eric is trying to resolve, claiming modernism for an organisation that by its fundamental nature is appropriate to the 19th or early 20th century and not to the 21st century. This is the time of the general union that will represent all grades, all industries, and will give that widespread protection.

Punishment and recruitment wars will divert energy. What we have to do is to have a coherent view of what trade unionism will mean in the 1990s, but also to talk about it in an attractive way. The split of the EETPU is an important and damaging diversion, but one which we shouldn't become obsessed with. It shouldn't move us off our own drive to modernise the movement, to demonstrate that the things we should be doing, in the mainstream of the union movement, are the real heartland of modern unionism. ●

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Right Royal Opposition

The Royal Family is riding high in the popularity stakes – except with the government. But shouldn't it worry us, asks **Rosalind Brunt**, that the monarchy is the best on offer in the way of moral opposition?

It's been a great year for lucky numbers and the heritage industry of Royal Britain. In addition to a princess born at the most numinous date and time of the century, there's been both 1588 and 1688 to celebrate. A lot of the Armada legend is wide of the mark. But that hasn't much mattered against the main point that we the English beat the Spanish and that this August, television star Kate O'Mara played Elizabeth Gloriana doing her Tilbury speech at the largest-ever Tudor pageant and ox-roasting fayre.

Meanwhile, the tercentenary of 'The Glorious Revolution' that laid the basis for Britain's present-day parliamentary monarchy and put paid to any return to European-style absolutism is still being played out in English towns and stately homes, with royal visits, mock battles and the actors of the English Civil War Society and the History Re-enactment Workshop.

As Tony Benn pointed out in July during the Commons' commemoration of 1688, the celebrations are conveniently leaving out the nasty bits, like the 'hideous repression' that followed William of Orange's invasion of Ireland. But then royal anniversaries like these are not mainly about historical accuracy in the first place. Rather, they work as what Nicholas Harman called in his book, *Dunkirk*, about another famously misrecalled event, 'a necessary myth'.

What is important about 'necessary myths' is that they are not intended as deliberate lies and propaganda. They always have *some* basis in reality and their main function is to appeal to national solidarity, to give some collective and communicable meaning to national identity. So the anniversaries of 1588 and 1688 and, in its own way, the royal birth at 8.18 pm, 8.8.88, 'say' something about being 'indestructibly British'. They appeal to a view of British history as 'our island race', an unbroken chain of stable evolution – albeit that the very notion of 'Britishness' obscures a neat but nasty English takeover of other nationalities.

At the very heart of these necessary myths of nationhood lies the English/British monarchy. It too is presented as an unfolding continuity of royal 'houses': its own glaring discontinuity – the other, inglorious, Revolution of the 1649 republic – quietly elided. So the present House of Windsor is always an integral part of national anniversary celebrations which, necessarily, justify their own existence as much as the spirit of the nation.

But while they undoubtedly stand for a Britain that appears to be going on going on in much the same old way, the Royal Family are also very much about responding to changed circumstances. They wouldn't have lasted into the 20th century otherwise, and even then there was the major hiccup of the first abdication. On the one hand, the Windsors continue to reproduce a particular version of national heritage. On the other, they are continually adapting – but in ways that are revealing both about how we the British regard the Royal Family and what values of Britishness they also embody for us.

In this sense, they are indeed, as the title of Tom Nairn's new book about the monarchy has it, 'The Enchanted Glass': just as their subjects project images on to them, so they reflect back at us symbols of nationhood. Nairn's point about 'enchantment' is that it is ultimately a dangerous, mesmerising fascination that royalty exerts and which leads him to argue for what he calls a 'quiet republicanism'.[1]

I agree with him. I think we can only respond adequately to all that royalty represents by putting republicanism back on the progressive and socialist agendas. I'm not quite sure what he means by 'quiet', but certainly republicanism needs to be rescued from the kind of elitist crankiness and extremism whereby the monarchy stands accused of being some media-fabricated conspiracy, an Establishment plot, a total irrelevance, or all three. Nairn's approach to republicanism starts with the necessity of taking royalty seriously as a national symbol, and that means grasping the point of its apparently most pointless and trivial aspects quite as much as its solemn moments.

It's from this perspective of continuity and change, supposed irrelevance and importance, that I want to look at recent royal events. As a convinced republican who remains 'enchanted' with the Royal Family, I am asking what, if anything, these events tell us about 'the state of the nation' in general and a response to life in Thatcher's times in particular.

So royal anniversaries and birth apart, what sort of a year has 1988 been for the Windsors so far? A rather uneventful period in terms of big occasions of state. The biggest ceremonial events have probably been the various royal visits to Australia to celebrate the third important mythic anniversary, 1788, when 'we' bagged that continent for the British Crown. But in general, the pageantry of the Royal Family has been downplayed against the personality angle. It is this 'human interest' side, which is repeatedly condemned as trivial and irrelevant, yet constantly fascinates and enchants – particularly when, as this year, it takes a noticeably sexual turn.

The Royal Family as human interest is not so much a function of events as of the modern media, particularly the tabloid press, operating as a national gossip network. Encouraged by the response to prolonged speculation about the state of the Waleses' marriage from autumn 1987 onwards, the media have vastly widened the Royalty-sex connection in 1988: from Princess Anne's alleged affair with a television star, via 'Mark Phillips' Secret Blonde', to 'Charles And His Other Women', 'Diana's Mum In Marriage Split', daily prurient comment about the Duchess of York's pregnancy, and most recently, 'Fergie Dad Vice Den'. But then the Queen 'forgives' the 'Bonking Major',

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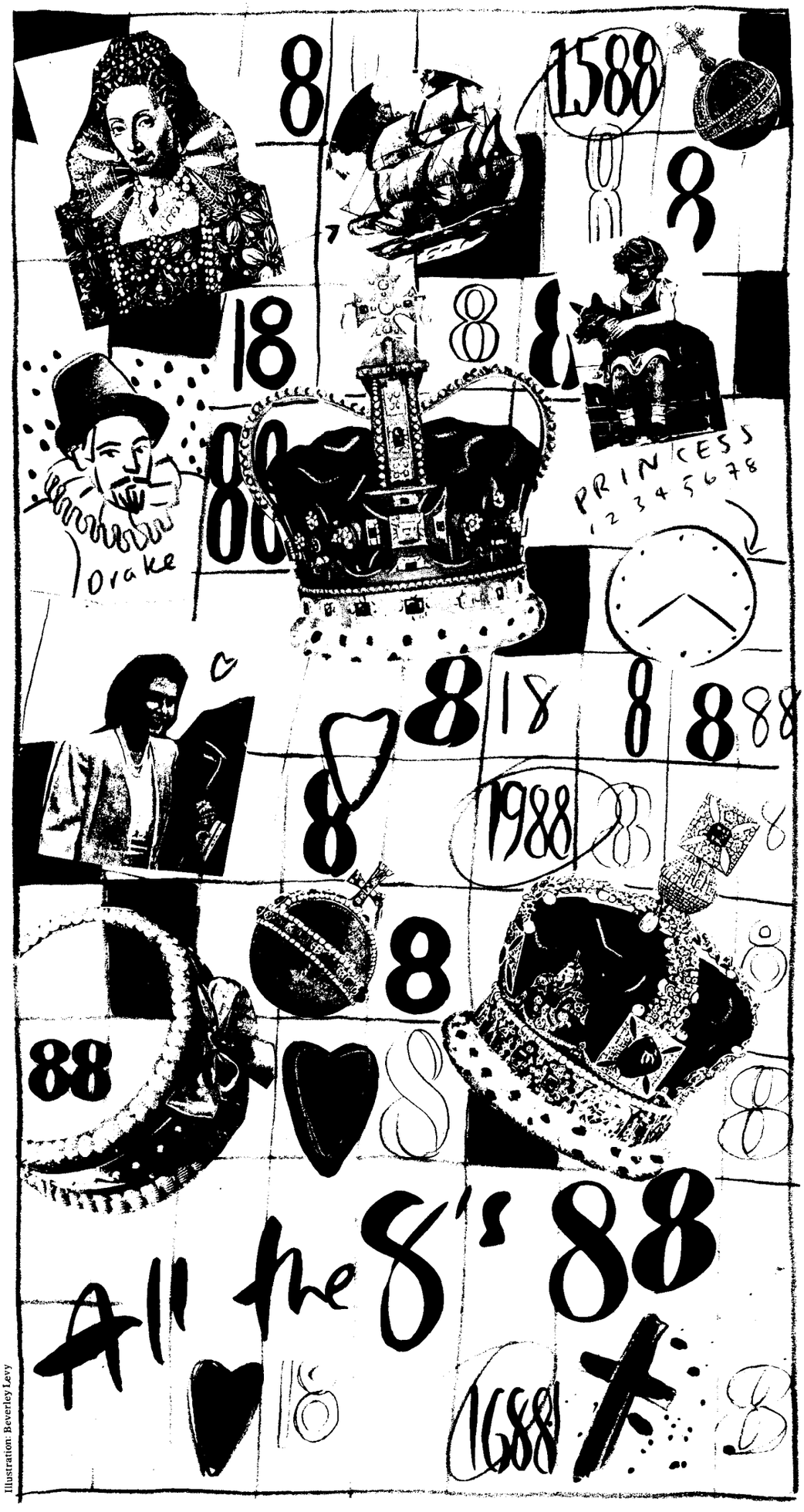

Illustration: Beverley Levy

his daughter's child – On Its Way At Last' – finally arrives, and in the midst of the August Armada anniversary. The Queen Mother, 'looking radiant and well in pastel blue and white' (*The Guardian*) celebrates her 88th birthday listening to a specially-composed poem from a local government officer from Macclesfield. It's only 300 years since 'The Glorious Revolution'; the natural order is restored and the Family Firm hangs on.

It does so partly because the 'trivial' human-interest version of royalty always stops short of the ultimate question: do we actually need them and if so, why? However vulgar, voyeuristic or hostile the media 'revelations' are, the Royal Family are still placed within a deferential framework that renders them once again unproblematic. Despite, as much as because of, their behavioural lapses, whatever would we do without them? *That* question remains complacently rhetorical; it is not to be asked for real.

But there is now another way the question is inflected. 'Whatever would we do without them?' is still posed rhetorically, but in a tone of rather desperate jokeyness. And it is used to draw attention to the role royalty now plays in relation to the present government. It's as if they offer some kind of counterpoint to Thatcherism. The issue is usually addressed in terms of human interest and contrasting personalities – do the Queen and Mrs Thatcher actually get on? But it's more fruitful to translate this in ideological terms: how are the monarchy and Thatcherism symbolically understood, and how is it that the Royal Family come to embody certain values and aspirations that are quite alien to the government's view of the world?

One way to think about this is to recall specific concrete images of the Royal Family and what they might be 'saying'. Here are three recent and widely-disseminated examples that immediately come to mind: the Queen Mother playing snooker with young Rastafarian men; the Princess of Wales, significantly gloveless, shaking hands with a patient in a newly-opened Aids treatment ward; the Prince of Wales telling the yuppies and gents of the City about their disparate proximity to the East End poverty he's just witnessed 'round the corner'.

It's not just that current members of the Royal Family happen to be nice, caring people – indeed, much media speculation focuses on their supposed mixtures of niceness and nastiness: isn't the Queen Mother supposedly something of a racist, for instance? It's rather that they *embody* niceness and caring as values to be shared and endorsed by us, the rest of the nation.

And importantly, their public recognition of marginalised, subordinated and often despised groups in society is about saying that these people too are 'us'. In this way, the Royal Family

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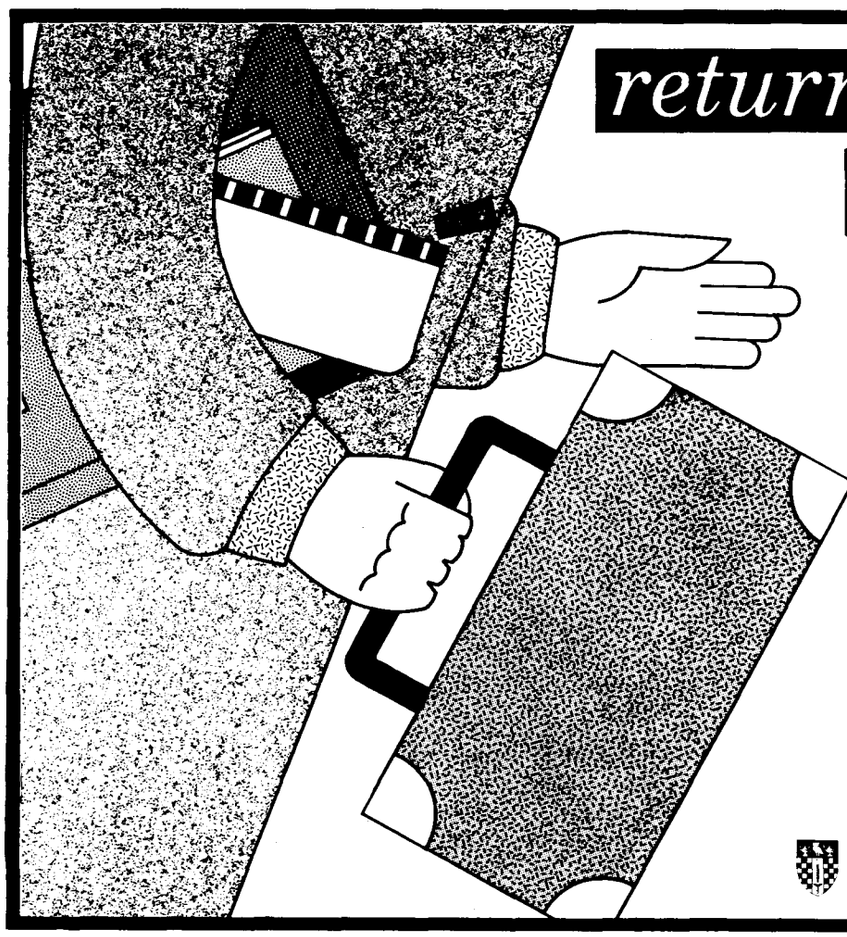

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functions very similarly to how Marx understood the workings of religion – as 'the opium of the people', not in any simple druggy sense; rather as 'the heart of the heartless world' and 'the spirit of spiritless conditions'.

Royalty's handshakes and waves and constant, if fleeting, participation in the everyday lives of their subjects is more than just being nice to those less fortunate than themselves. They are also gestures towards making the world a nicer place for everyone – and that in itself presents an implicit challenge to the ideology of the present government. What the images I outlined represent is, at very most, a sort of decent British liberalism. But it is an indication of how far Thatcherism has gone down the authoritarian road when they become threatening and potentially subversive to the elected government.

Like the BBC and the Church of England, those other state institutions with aspirations to represent the nation-as-a-whole, monarchy embraces a set of liberal beliefs based on pluralism. It recognises real social differences and divisions but seeks to harness them in the name of national harmony without adequately acknowledging, in the way that socialism attempts to do, that they're based on real inequalities of power.

In blurring this distinction, Thatcherism sees liberal pluralism as the slippery path to a uniformly socialist state. It is therefore, as they say, no accident that these national institutions of BBC, Church and Royalty, together sometimes with the House of Lords, have been singled out by the ideologues of the Right, and that their liberal commitment to impartiality and fairness is condemned as partisanship and 'political interference'.

'Even when they avoid speaking parts, members of the Royal Family have been transformed into moral campaigners against Thatcherism'

Thus in April this year, did the former chairman of the Conservative Party, Norman Tebbit, appear on BBC's *Panorama*, a programme he had previously execrated, but obviously felt was now quite tamed, to express his fears that the Prince of Wales might one day 'go too far' and, for instance, start advocating 'socialist solutions'. The reference was to the Prince's concern about issues like the environment, inner-city decay and unemployment: 'I suppose the Prince of Wales feels extra sympathy towards those who've got no job because, in a way, he's got no job . . . He's 40, yet he's not been able to take responsibility for anything, and I think really that's his problem.'

Although typical of the Tebbit cosh-and-run style, this attack was rather surprising in its context. The *Panorama* programme was attempting an all-round view of the regular things the Prince does and many of them were shown to be perfectly consonant with Thatcherism's 'enterprise culture' and some had received personal endorsement from the prime minister herself. For instance, the Prince's project, Business In The Community, is about attracting capitalists to invest in inner-city schemes and his Prince's Trust mainly provides start-up capital for young people establishing small businesses; while the import of many of his speeches could not be further from the 'danger' of socialism, given their emphasis on private sector solutions to social and economic problems.

At the same time, I think Tebbit's fears had some real foundation. The very even-handedness of liberalism always acknowledges there are at least two sides to every question, and while it can cope better with symptoms than causes, liberalism does nevertheless point up the problem areas in society. So Tebbit's attack was also implicitly referring to the Prince's 'other side', such as his appeal the previous month in a speech to US architects, when he said: 'If the money motive for development is the only serious force in urban renewal, then we shall not succeed. Building is about more than just money and market forces.' While this hardly presents a socialist commitment to abolishing profit, it was a sufficient stab at the heart of Tebbitry, with an ideological stance even more brazen than Thatcher's in its insistence on the creation of surplus value as the sole criterion of merit. For similar reasons, an aggressive anti-government stance has been read into the many 'green' perspectives Charles has recently adopted and which were also demonstrated in the *Panorama* piece.

The programme was entitled 'Prince of Conscience', an accurate indication of the particular role Charles has chosen for himself as heir to the throne. In the film he warily acknowledged his obvious differences from poor people but also spoke of his 'effort to put myself in their position'. As he explained in a radio interview last December: 'Clearly it would be much easier to lead a quiet life. I don't need to do all this. It's just that I feel strongly about a lot of these things. If you go round the country in my position – I've learned a lot, I've listened, I've looked a lot – you can't just sit there and do nothing about it.' This self-chosen role commands widespread public approval: according to recent opinion polls, a clear majority of the population believe Prince Charles should 'speak out' more.

Given the Prime Minister's election attack on 'drooling' social concern and her translation of the Good Samaritan story into a parable about money-making, it is not surprising that such instances of speaking out are conceived as direct criticism of the government. But they are actually expressions of a moral, rather than political, concern. And in this sense, the Royal Family increasingly appear as some kind of moral opposition to what Thatcherism stands for.

The Queen *as* queen, and one who is continually and cautiously mindful of her place as constitutional monarch, chooses not to speak out in the same way as Charles. Instead, she arranges elaborately coded signals for letting it be known that she is 'concerned' – most notably recently, about Thatcher's and Reagan's various underminings of the Commonwealth, South African sanctions, the use of British bases for the American bombing of Libya and the social divisiveness of the miners' strike.

But even when they avoid speaking parts altogether, members of the Royal Family have been transformed into moral campaigners against Thatcherism. Take the prolonged National Health crisis of last winter/spring: who would have imagined that the Queen Mother, a personage publicly loved for her nonverbal charms, would have come to symbolise the fight against Tory cuts one day in March, because of a letter written on her behalf expressing regret about the closure of a South Wales geriatric unit she had opened only the previous year?

Or how about the front page lead of *The People* last Christmas? This was headlined: 'Di Wants To Work On The Wards – Fergie Joins Her Plea To The Queen'. It ran: 'Worried Princess Diana and Fergie want to roll up their sleeves and work in hospital wards to help beat the NHS crisis. Cleaning, making beds, feeding patients – they have appealed to the Queen to let them do *anything* to show how much they care about Britain's struggling state hospitals. A member of Fergie's circle said: "Diana and Fergie are desperately unhappy about the NHS. They have asked the Queen to let them show how much they care and to encourage others to help".'

A likely tale. But while on one level this story has the familiar hallmarks of fabrication and trivia, it also rings true and draws on other, better authenticated, news items about the Princess of Wales being 'shocked' by learning from nurses themselves about their salary scales and the Duchess of York 'coming close to tears' and feeling 'humbled' when witnessing nurses' dedication to very sick children.

As is well-known, compassion, humility and tears do not figure much in the emotional vocabulary of Thatcherism. What is happening here, I suggest, is that increasingly Thatcherism and the monarchy, and specifically, regardless of their actual relationship, Mrs Thatcher and the Queen, are becoming emblematic figures of polar opposition. In popular imagination, they are seen as engaged in a sort of moral battle for the British soul – to the extent that each is assumed to want the stately trappings of the other.

Thus, in caricature and cartoons, Thatcher is frequently presented as trying to outroyal the Royals, if not indeed achieve the status of Absolute Monarch. Hence the routine *Spitting Image* plot where members of the

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Royal Family work out ways of doing Thatcher in. At the same time, the Queen, along with Prince Charles in particular, is being viewed in the role of champion of her people: a member of the Establishment definitely, and admittedly one of Them, but nevertheless at the same time, somehow on the side of Us. This is a feeling most poignantly expressed when groups involved in apparently intransigent struggle, like the women in the striking mining communities, appeal to a monarch known to have a degree of sympathy with them to, in some indefinable way, 'do' something for their situation. For if the Queen of England can't help, then who is left who can?

At a time when *any* opposition to Thatcherism needs to be gratefully received, however symbolic its form, this does not look like the obvious moment to be wanting the banner of republicanism to be raised anew. Especially when all types of organised political dissent both within and outside parliament appear so weak and demoralised against Thatcherism. For without doubt, monarchy has more popular appeal than Thatcherism and, I would reckon, more moral authority to pose against it than currently any of the parties of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

But it is at this very point, I think, that republicanism must make its re-entry. For just as Thatcher for all her pretensions can never be, A Regular, Regular, Royal Queen, as the last Labour election broadcast so effectively satirised her, so also there is something utterly ludicrous and dangerously anachronistic about hereditary feudal relics elected by no-one being made to stand-in for the national identity and popular will. But I do not wish to sound like I'm reverting to cranky down-with-the-monarchy stuff here. On the contrary, the situation is the more troubling, *precisely* to the extent that these relics currently embody more interestingly human, pleasant, liberal and morally progressive features in their persons than ever did the narrow-minded racist and chauvinist woman the British actually voted in to run the country.

'There is something utterly ludicrous about hereditary feudal relics being made to stand in for the national identity and popular will'

In this sense, I think the symbolic confrontation of monarchy and Thatcherism is part of a wider crisis of representation. For who or what represents the people of Britain *apart from* the Royal Family? And doesn't retaining a monarchy contribute to an incapacity to develop other, democratic and accountable representational forms? What does it mean, for instance, that there has been no adequate alternative concept of 'the people' for the last 300 years at least? The 1688 Revolution not only prevented royal absolutism from taking root again in Britain; it also effectively spelled the end of any further attempt to establish popular sovereignty[2]. In doing so, it gave new life to a relic, establishing the institution of modern monarchy with its enchanting capacity to adapt itself in the image of shifting national identities without giving much away – especially not revealing itself to *be* a relic.

In so far as ideologies are never simply ideas in our heads, but are indeed the myths we live by and which contribute to our sense of self, I think it actually matters that the British have no real identity as 'we the people' but continue to consign ourselves to a subordinated position as 'subjects of the Queen'. Of course everybody says, 'I wouldn't have *her* job for the world!' But isn't that also a way of telling ourselves we're not actually up to self-government yet?

And while it is undoubtedly a great deal pleasanter, more fun even, to bear the 'subject' identity than to conceive of ourselves as continually under Thatcher's thrall, it is hardly a means of active empowerment or mobilisation. So, because in the end belonging to Her Majesty denies any real political agency and collective movement, it seems to me that *any* modern political party, let alone a socialist one, cannot but start from a republican position as its very bottom line. ●

1 Tom Nairn, ***The Enchanted Glass, Britain And Its Monarchy***, Radius, 1988.
2 See for instance, a succinct summary of this position in A L Morton and others, ***1688: How Glorious Was the Revolution?*** Communist Party History Group pamphlet No. 78, July 1988.

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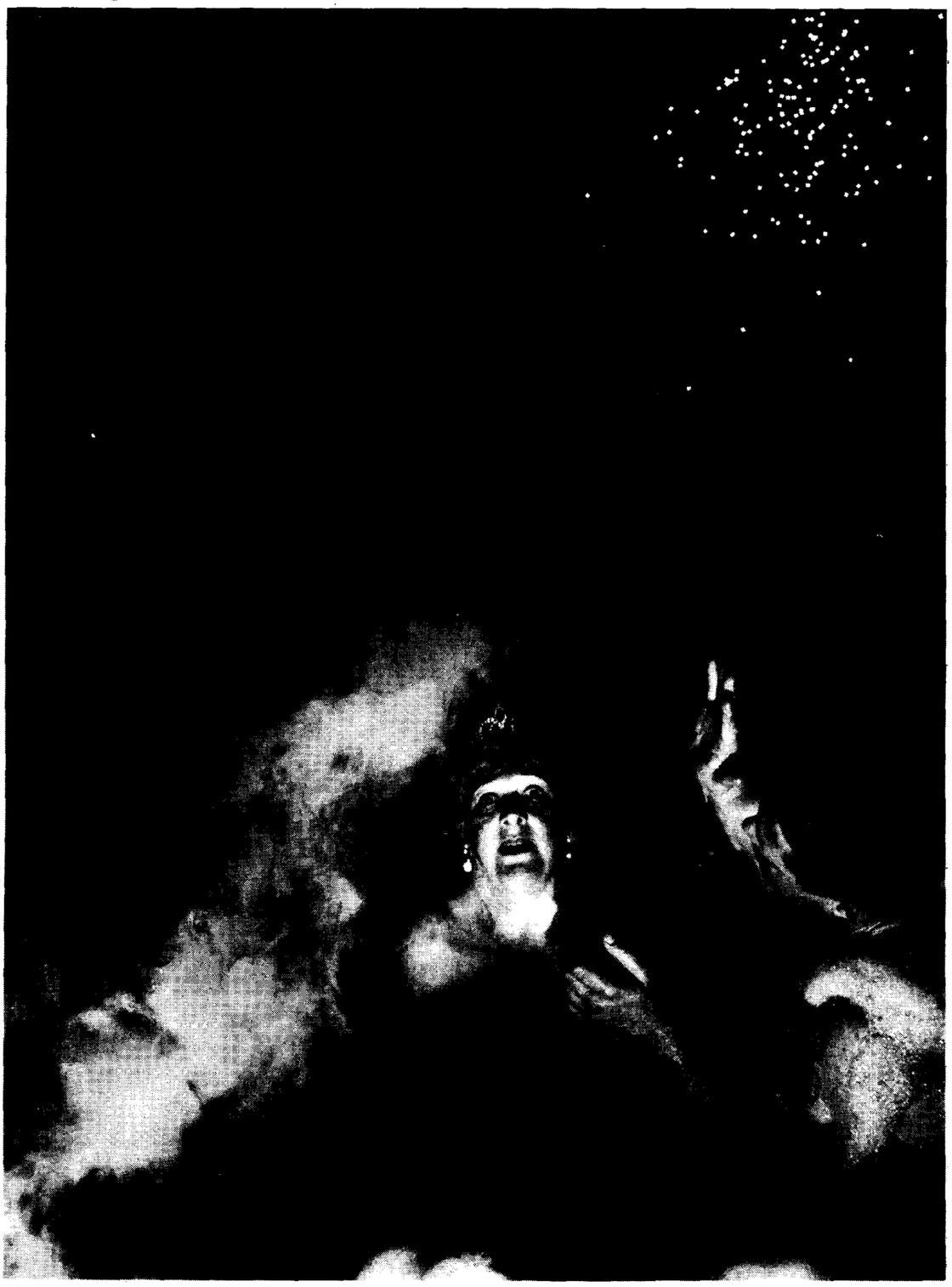

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Facing Up To The Future

The Left has been in retreat for a decade. It has lost out badly in its contest with Thatcherism. Even more seriously, it has failed to address the new world of the 80s. Too often it has seemed more interested in the past than the future. The Labour Party is seeking to respond to this problem through its Policy Review for the 1990s.

At its congress last November, the Communist Party decided to redraft its programme, *The British Road To Socialism*, which, when last published in 1977, was a pioneering document in the reconstruction of the Left. Earlier this year the Communist Party's executive committee appointed a group of eight to work, with a completely free hand, on a discussion document as a preliminary to the actual redrafting of *The British Road To Socialism* next year. The group took as its main brief, in preparing **Facing Up To The Future**, the need to confront the radically-changed world in which we now live, and how that requires us to rethink the Left's policies and perspectives.

The group that prepared the document were: *Beatrix Campbell, Marian Darke, Bill Innes, Martin Jacques, Monty Johnstone, Paula Lanning, Charlie Leadbeater* and *Jeff Rodrigues*, with *Margaret Woddis* as secretary. **Facing Up To The Future**, which we publish here as a special Communist Party supplement, will also be carried, together with subsequent discussion, in *7 Days*, the Communist Party weekly

Illustrations: Clifford Harper

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Unemployment was about 1m, there were more than a quarter of a million miners, North Sea oil production was building up, Jim Callaghan was in 10 Downing Street, it was 1977. The Communist Party produced the fourth edition of the *British Road To Socialism*, the party's statement of socialist aims and principles. It was the year that Mrs Margaret Thatcher took over as leader of the Tory Party.

More than a decade later, unemployment is close to 3m, oil production is in decline, there are fewer than 100,000 miners, Lord Jim Callaghan carries out civic duties, and Mrs Margaret Thatcher talks of a transcendent Conservatism reaching into the next century.

The *British Road To Socialism* needs redrafting. This document is intended to promote discussion around the issues facing the Communist Party and the Left, to prepare for redrafting the *British Road* in 1989.

This will be central to the party's political work, its involvement in popular struggles, by giving a sense of strategic direction to the socialist project. It will play a role in reorienting the Left and progressive forces within Britain, continuing the party's pioneering work over the last decade in developing the Left's analysis of the changing economic, social and political terrain.

The New Terrain

Western industrialised societies are being fundamentally reshaped. New technology is transforming the way people work and what they produce. Cultural and social life is becoming more diverse. Most women have a dual social role, in employment and domestic work. Old industrial areas are in decline and new sunrise corridors are growing.

Society is in transition to a new phase of development after a decade of stagnation and structural crisis in the 1970s. In the 90s restructuring will spread and gather momentum.

This fundamental restructuring of the economy and social life requires an equally fundamental restructuring of political forces. Already Thatcherism has recognised this new terrain and sought to appropriate it for itself. However, much of the Left, far from moving onto this new ground, wants to remain within an 'old order' which is disintegrating beneath its feet.

The old order

At the economic core of the old order, established after the second world war, were large factories, which enveloped armies of mainly semi-skilled workers, carrying out repetitious tasks within a strict division of labour. They pumped out standardised products from flow lines of machinery, dedicated to production of that item.

Production was routine. Competition was predictable. Companies competed mainly through price differences on similar products, rather than through innovation or significant product differentiation.

The mass workers were also the mass consumers of the products of these plants. The spread of these products – cars, televisions, washing machines, fridges – were part of a social revolution in leisure and consumption.

The postwar consensus, between organised labour, business and the social-democratic state was built on these economic and social foundations. It represented the gains of working class political pressure. But not simply that.

Keynesian economic policies maintained full employment. But this was also vital to ensure rising profitability.

The welfare state provided mass housing, the national health service, and unemployment relief. But with it came poor quality, lack of choice, and paternalism.

Women had filled the labour market during the war. But the postwar consensus reasserted men's social and economic privileges. The postwar political consensus was underpinned by a conservative social consensus about women's role.

The decay of the old order

By the beginning of the 1970s the old order had started to decay. A decade of stagnation culminated in a structural crisis for the postwar social-democratic project, from which it could not recover.

Its economic managerialism was incapable of tackling Britain's deeper economic malaise – low productivity growth, and failing competitiveness. Its political structures were unable to contain mounting social conflict over the distribution of failing growth. Its paternalism left it unable to respond to aspirations for greater choice and more flexible state services. Its social conservatism tried to muffle a range of social upheavals from feminism to punk, which were irrepressible.

Society and the state seemed adrift, rudderless. Thatcherism took charge with its authoritarian but populist solution to the crisis.

'Society is in transition to a new phase of development, after a decade of stagnation and structural crisis'

The new order

Almost a decade after the election of the first Thatcher government, British society is entering what might be called a 'new order'. The exact shape of this new order is not predetermined. It will be the outcome of political struggle. But its outline is becoming clear.

At its heart will be information technology and microelectronics – the new technological core of the economy. Robots, computers, word processors, facsimile machines, are becoming the currency of work. Information technology allows production to be both more flexible, but more integrated, through centralised control.

The workforce is being fundamentally reorganised around new technology. Traditional demarcation lines between skilled and unskilled, blue collar and white collar workers, are being abolished after massive redundancies in manufacturing. The new order will be about flexibility, team working, and service-sector work.

Beyond that, restructuring is creating more fundamental divisions – between those trained to work with new technology and those left behind; the 'core' full-time workers, and the growing number of part-time service sector workers. Around the high-technology offices and factories cluster low-technology, low-wage subcontractors and small companies.

Women could make up half the workforce by the mid-1990s, but mainly confined to low-skill, low-wage occupations. The rise in women's employment fundamentally undermines the social and economic assumptions of the old order, that workers were male breadwinners for traditional families.

These changes in technology and work are linked to important changes in the way companies organise production and the way they compete. Innovation, product differentiation and quality have become much more important. Companies no longer compete primarily through cutting price on standardised products.

The intensification of competition has brought important changes in corporate power. Power has further concentrated in the hands of global companies, who can afford enormous investments in product development. But many large companies no longer attempt to make everything they need, so in tandem small companies have become more important as subcontractors and innovators.

Many companies no longer produce for a homogeneous market of mass consumers, but for market segments, made up of consumers with distinct tastes and lifestyles. In the old order mass consumption was linked to mass production. In the new order, new divisions within the workforce and more flexible production are producing more segmented consumption, and more diverse forms of social life.

Lifestyles have become more diverse in a revolt against the centralising sameness of the old order. Designer labels have replaced mass fashion. The BBC and ITV will no longer dominate our living rooms. They will be joined by a multiplicity of European satellite television channels.

But this diversity and individualism masks deeper social fragmentation. Many middle and working-class families will in the next decade become not merely homeowners but property inheritors. But council tenants will be stuck in crumbling tower blocks. While affluent consumers will reach for their compact discs, courtesy of their credit cards, the poor will be ghettoised in deepening poverty.

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Towns in the new growth corridors – Swindon, Basingstoke, Silicon Glen – are the cauldrons for the new order. The cultures of steel towns, coal towns and textile towns are in decline. The sunrise culture of the hi-tech service towns is on the rise.

The uncertainty over the shape of the new order in Britain is matched by instability internationally. The power of the nation-state is in decline with the rise of international financial markets, and the power of global companies.

But economic power is also shifting. The old order was formed within the international hegemony of the United States. The dynamic forces behind the creation of the new order are the Far Eastern economies – Japan and South Korea.

Politics and the new terrain

Much of the old order took its form from the mass production pioneered by Ford, and has become known as 'Fordism'. The new era can be called 'post-Fordism'. The 1990s will see myriad political and social struggles. But in essence they will come down to a single question: on what terms will this new order be created?

The Left's most urgent task is to defeat Thatcherism's reactionary restructuring, its attempt at a 'conservative modernisation'. But the Left will only break Thatcherism's grip if it mobilises opposition around the aspirations and antagonisms bred by the new order. This will require an alternative vision of a progressive restructuring of society, a 'socialist modernisation'. The immediate political task of defeating Thatcherism will only succeed backed by a more fundamental rethinking of socialist struggle, which matches the fundamental restructuring behind the creation of the new order.

This will require a thorough reorientation of left politics. Most of the Left's imagery, programmes, forms of struggle, resonate with the ideas of the old order or 'Fordism' – standardisation, scale, homogeneity, mass consumption, mass production, mass housing, all within a national economy. In future the Left's imagery, programmes and struggles will have to flow from the new order or 'post-Fordism' – flexibility, diversity, differentiation, decentralisation, internationalisation.

The question will not be whether there will be labour flexibility: there will be. But on what terms?

There will be greater diversity and individualism in social life. Will this lead simply to social fragmentation, or can it be complemented by social solidarity?

The local and central state will have to intervene directly in the productive base of the economy. But how and with what aims?

The demand for more decentralised, higher-quality public services, open to choice, is clear. This could either lead to privatisation and greater inequality, or new democratic forms of socialised welfare provision.

Work and social life are dissolving the old social blocs, which were the symbolic armies of social conflict. How can coalitions of diverse interests be welded into a political force?

It will be pointless to attempt to resurrect the power of the nation-state. The real debate of the 1990s will be about what kind of international alliances Britain will have to form to control the international economy.

These questions will be the focus for politics in the 1990s. Unless the Left faces them, it will leave the field open to Thatcherism.

Thatcherism

Thatcherism's rise must be located in two contexts. Its initial arrival marked the complete exhaustion of the postwar social-democratic project. Its first task was to dismantle the rusting political infrastructure of the postwar consensus. But Thatcherism's project has since moved on. Its aim now is a 'conservative modernisation', to ensure the new order is created in a conservative image.

Thatcherism has replaced dull managerialism with unrelenting change. Politics is no longer simply the art of the possible. Thatcherism has changed what is politically possible, in a sweeping conservative transformation which for most people was unthinkable 10 years ago.

'Thatcherism has replaced dull managerialism with unrelenting change. Politics is no longer simply the art of the possible'

It has coalesced diverse interests behind its programme, but not merely by offering economic rewards. It seeks to cement its support by articulating a range of strongly-felt and popular fears, prejudices and aspirations.

At the centre of its political drive is a combination of individualism and authoritarianism.

It has articulated demands for greater choice and individual responsibility with an ideology of assertive individualism.

Individualism offers the alluring myth that individuals can be self-sufficient. It denies wider collective responsibility for social problems. If collective solutions like state education, or the NHS do not meet individual choices, people are encouraged to buy their way out, to opt for private provision.

Its individualism is dynamic and in a sense radical, because it encourages people to remake their worlds. But simultaneously it is an aggressively conservative view of how society should be organised.

It sanctions the marketisation of society: the private sector and the market are symbolically associated with flexibility, efficiency and choice. It enfeebles the public sector, which is associated with inflexibility, inefficiency and lack of choice.

So those who can afford to opt for private provision, those in full-time employment who have prospered in the last five years, benefit. The poor, the unemployed, who have had the main burdens of restructuring forced upon their shoulders, become more chronically and acutely dependent on an impoverished public sector.

Individual choice appears as a neutral ideology, something that everyone can ascribe to. But it has justified growing inequality, the collapse of social cohesion, and the abandonment of social responsibility.

It is Thatcherism's most fundamental and extensive privatisation: the privatisation of social aspiration, obligation and responsibility. It explains the fundamental nature of its attack on socialism, for it undermines the sense of the social upon which socialism is based.

Thatcherism's individualism is in part drawn from a right-wing libertarianism. But it moves in tandem with an authoritarianism aimed at restoring social and economic discipline.

Its socially authoritarian agendas on crime, law-and-order, immigration and homosexuality, are a response to the permissive egalitarianism of the 1960s, which it blames for a collapse of respect for social order. It has sanctioned a cultural racism, a little-Englandism, an attack on those who do not accept Thatcherite British values.

While its ideology is anti-state, it has both centralised state power and used it more strategically than any previous government.

Local government and local education authorities are being stripped of their powers. The old public industries which threatened to darken the dawn of the enterprise economy – coal, shipbuilding, steel, cars – have been restructured. The welfare state has become an increasingly coercive part of its economic strategy. It has also sanctioned the rise of corporate authoritarianism: international capital is being given a free hand to restructure the economy.

Its individualism and authoritarianism combine, to allow a socially divisive privatisation and marketisation of society. Thatcherism's answers for the key questions for the 1990s flow from this cocktail.

Its free-market economic strategy means new technology and labour flexibility are being introduced to the benefit of employers. Its conservative individualism means choice is largely confined to consumerism in the market; diversity masks deeper social fragmentation. Its 'decentralisation' of welfare state services will promote choice only with inequality. It has strategically intervened in the economy, but to open it to unconstrained international capital.

Meanwhile, it well understands that politics is about building alliances. It does not rely on a single class; it has constructed an alliance of diverse social forces behind its conservative modernisation.

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Challenging Thatcherism

Since Thatcherism came to power there has been no period in which it has not faced unpopularity and opposition. But despite crises which seemed to threaten its future, Thatcherism has maintained the momentum it needs to overcome opposition. There are two vital components to this.

It has to reproduce a broad, popular consensus for its politics. Its success in this cannot be measured purely electorally, but by whether people take up the values of enterprise culture and popular capitalism, in everyday life in shops, banks, schools, homes, offices and factories.

But in addition it has to continue to deliver the economic goods for enough of society, by reversing Britain's economic decline, and maintaining real income growth for those in work.

These two conditions are vital if it is to maintain a coalition of social forces behind its reactionary restructuring. Any assessment of the future of the Left must start from an examination of whether Thatcherism can secure these conditions.

Issues

Even in areas where Thatcherism has been successful there are weaknesses which can be exploited. And there are a range of issues on which it has occupied the high ground, but failed to fully capture it.

It remains the only force which appears to have a strategy to modernise the economy.

But productivity and competitiveness cannot be improved again by another wave of mass redundancies. In the next decade the real task will be to enact a positive modernisation of the economy, through boosting education and training, research and development, investment and innovation, design and marketing.

Private initiative alone will not achieve this. It requires a co-ordinated, sustained strategy. But Thatcherism's free-market economic ideology inhibits it from intervening to thoroughly modernise the economy. Productivity growth and competitiveness may well start to fail; the balance of payments deficit will rise.

So popular confidence in Thatcherism's much-trumpeted economic success is far from guaranteed. But maintaining this is vital because many of the constituencies it has created depend on growing incomes.

But nor does it completely command the moral high ground over how the costs and benefits of restructuring should be distributed.

It has encouraged a pessimism about whether the welfare state can tackle social problems. But opposition has prevented it from completely refashioning welfare and relinquishing the state's responsibilities to the poor.

It has been least successful over the health service. Since 1983 it has fostered ambitions to radically restructure and privatise health care. But repeatedly it has been forced to retreat in the face of popular protest.

It faces growing criticism over its toleration of the inequalities it has created. The north-south divide is a metaphor for much wider concern about its social divisiveness.

Criticism of its social harshness is matched by opposition to its authoritarian use of power. For many, Mrs Thatcher's government has become close to an elective dictatorship.

Resistance to authoritarianism is not just about opposition to the undermining of local government. It reflects a resistance to the spread of an authoritarian social culture, reflected in Thatcherism's policies on official secrets, law and order and gay and lesbian rights.

Finally Thatcherism is vulnerable on a range of international issues which have been the focus of domestic protest. It is estranged from the anti-apartheid movement, from movements on peace and Third World aid. These are based on an international, progressive humanism, which is in conflict with its nationalistic, materialistic individualism.

'As the opposition in Scotland shows, the breadth of the poll tax creates the potential for broad, popular protest'

Constituencies

Thatcherism has also failed to either fully incorporate, or entirely marginalise, a range of social groups which resist it.

Black people have been defiantly resistant to Thatcherism. The riots of the early 1980s and since, are evidence of the hostility latent in many black people's response to Thatcherism's law and order policies, its British bulldog nationalism.

Thatcherism's support among women is also unstable. Its shifting sexual and moral agenda is vulnerable to pressure from women on a range of issues from child benefit, to pensions, health, and law and order.

Its harsh materialism has politicised the churches, which have mounted the most sustained challenge to Thatcherism's claims to moral superiority.

While Thatcherism champions economic growth at almost any cost, support for the green movement and environmentalism has grown across society.

While Thatcherism stresses the importance of voluntary action, the voluntary sector is increasingly a focus for coalitions pressing alternative policies and solutions to social problems. And a majority of the public sector professional classes refuse to give it support.

There are also areas of the country which emphatically reject Thatcher's new Britain. This is most obvious in Scotland where dissident nationalism and the labour movement speak more authoritatively for the nation than Thatcher's besieged ministers. Much of the north of England, Wales, and the inner cities have cultures and coalitions of social groups which are resistant to Thatcherism.

But widespread resistance to Thatcherism will only be mobilised into opposition around political struggles which create an alliance among different groups.

Thatcher's flagship, the poll tax, could well provide the ground for such an alliance. It epitomises Thatcherism's values, with an individual paying the same tax, whether dinner lady or duke. It will shift resources from poor to rich. It will further centralise state control at the expense of local democracy. All are issues which have before become focal points of opposition to the government.

Many of the constituencies Thatcherism has already failed to incorporate will be further antagonised by the tax. Indeed, as the opposition in Scotland shows, the breadth of the tax creates the potential for broad, popular protest, involving the labour movement, local authorities, community groups, black, youth and women's organisations.

But turning resistance into opposition is not enough. This will at best limit Thatcherism. The opposition has to be transformed into a movement in support of a progressive, alternative strategy. The Left cannot merely contest Thatcherism's terms for the creation of the new order. It has to develop its own vision of what that new order should be. It has to become a force capable of commanding the new terrain.

The Left

The obstacles to this are evident in the divisions which disable the opposition parties as an electoral force. But these divisions cannot be overcome simply by electoral pacts. For they are symptoms of more fundamental pressures for political realignment which are redefining what the 'Left' could stand for.

The new divisions in the British labour movement, with the breakaway of the EETPU electricians union, the formation of the SDP and the SLD, the reformation of the Left into its so-called 'hard' and 'soft' factions and the rising energy of progressive social movements, are not separate developments.

This is a single restructuring of the Left: the product of the dissolution of the Left's old constituencies formed by the old order, and the emergence of new ones, which the traditional organisations of the Left cannot fully represent.

This has created three major problems for the Left.

Firstly, there is a division between those parts of the Left which want to struggle around the aspirations, antagonisms and opportunities of the new terrain, and those which want to keep alive old policies, in the hope that this will resurrect the

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old world for which they were fashioned.

Secondly, there is a division over how to come to terms with the new terrain. The Right of the old labour movement – the EETPU and the SDP – have their own version of modernisation which recognises the new order but largely acquiesces in the Thatcherite settlement. As yet, however, the Left of the labour movement, even where it recognises the new terrain, has failed to produce a modernising perspective which is up to the historical task.

These divisions have in turn created the third and most important problem: how to construct a vision of socialist modernisation, which could provide the common reference point for a social coalition for progressive change. How can a sense of collective purpose, and social solidarity be constructed on the new terrain?

In the past, the Left's project has provided a common reference point for a progressive social coalition – popular fronts in opposition to fascism in the 30s, the progressive expansion of the public sector in the postwar period. The Left will need such a vision in the future. But as things stand the dissolution of the Left's old constituencies is leading to fragmentation, rather than the consolidation of a new coalition around an alternative political perspective.

The difficulties of renewing a sense of common purpose run throughout the Left's politics. How can a coalition be built from diverse social groups, with different interests? What forms of political organisation and struggle will represent and mobilise these groups, many of whom do not identify with the labour movement? What ideological perspective might provide a sense of common purpose and values for this coalition?

Social forces

Central to realignment on the Left is the recomposition of the working class, because assumptions about the character and interests of this class have provided the collective purpose for left politics.

Class in modern capitalism is not the product of a single polarisation between a ruling class, which owns the means of production, and a working class of wage labourers. Class is produced by the intersection of different kinds of exploitation, which produce different class positions within the workforce.

The working class is that class which has no productive assets to counter capitalist exploitation at work. But the development of postwar capitalism has produced a great swathe of wage earners and the self-employed, who control some kind of productive asset – skills, knowledge, organisational power over production – as part of the means of production. They are both exploited and exploiters. An increasing number of people in modern capitalism occupy these 'contradictory class locations'. And this complexity has increased with the new divisions created by the transition to the new order.

The importance of these contradictions within the workforce means that class cannot straightforwardly provide the collective interest for modern socialism.

As importantly, there is no such thing as a 'pure' class identity. Everyone comes to their sense of their class through their sense of gender, and ethnicity, as well as regional and religious attachments.

Exploitation through work is not the only determinant of how power and resources are distributed. Other forms of oppression and domination systematically structure inequalities in power. The preponderance of women and ethnic minority workers in low-wage, low-skilled jobs cannot be explained by capitalist exploitation. It can only be explained by the way that gender and racial discrimination allot people to different places within the workforce.

Women and black people thus have a potential point of common interest which cannot be reduced to class, and goes well beyond the workplace. Sexism and racism affect their sense of self, their identification with other people, throughout social life.

What does all this mean for a socialist strategy aimed at mobilising a movement with a common interest in a progressive restructuring?

'Socialism will not succeed on the basis of an appeal to a single 'pure' class identity'

Socialism will not succeed on the basis of an appeal to a single, 'pure' class identity. It will need to construct an alliance of social forces, made up of diverse class and social interests. This does not mean that 'class struggle' should be downgraded. It means that class politics will have to take new forms: more than ever it will be about building alliances. But as importantly the social arena will be a key area of contestation. Socialist strategy must connect economic struggles with social, moral, sexual and ethnic struggles. This can no longer be a secondary agenda, after the 'class' struggle. It must be alongside it, centre stage.

The interests of the majority of the workforce in the next decade – women – can only be advanced if working time, domestic responsibilities and child care are transformed together. Action at work – class struggle – will be pointless unless it is conceived as part of a wider social struggle against women's oppression.

The importance of the social agenda is not confined to women. For most workers social life has become more important with the decline in male working time, and rises in real earnings. Increasingly coalitions will be most easily constructed around issues which affect the quality of social life – health, education, ecology – rather than around the workplace.

Popular alliances

In tandem with the dissolution of the Left's old constituencies and the emergence of new social forces, the 1980s have witnessed a weakening of traditional forms of socialist struggle, and the strengthening of alternative forms of popular struggle.

It is vital the Left develops popular ways to mobilise people in political action, because Thatcherism is privatising politics, squeezing the public spaces for political action. The unions are no longer the focus for political mobilisation that they were in the late 1970s, local authorities are no longer able to provide the innovative models of municipal socialism that were produced in the early 1980s, by the GLC for instance. The freedom of higher education, theatre, the arts, the media, are under attack. The infrastructure which supported left political action in the 1970s is being dismantled.

Despite this, new popular movements have grown around voluntary organisations, community groups, the churches, music, and single-issue campaigning groups. Live Aid and the Mandela concert showed that hundreds of thousands of people could be mobilised around political events, which were implicitly anti-Thatcherite.

The decline of traditional struggle and the rise of novel forms of struggle have produced a crisis of representation and organisation among the opposition to Thatcherism.

Many social struggles go unrepresented in formal politics because they do not fit within the culture and priorities of the labour movement. The labour movement is weakened as a result. But so too are the social movements which have no systematic access to parliamentary power or to collective bargaining.

The key to the future of the opposition to Thatcherism, and the character of the Left, will be strategic alliances between the labour movement and popular forces outside it. This will require a transformation of the labour movement's culture.

The Labour Party's election defeats are symptoms of a far deeper crisis in the party's relationship with the society it seeks to govern.

It is unable to develop a vision of socialist modernisation, because it is still trapped within its inheritance of social-democratic managerialism. It does not recognise that the crisis of socialism is not a set of election setbacks, but a failure to modernise itself alongside the social and economic forces behind the creation of the new order.

As yet it has been unable to come to terms with the dissolution of its traditional constituencies, and to reach out to new social forces. The political momentum for change can only be built through a wide range of campaigns on health, housing, the poll tax, which cut across society. But too often the Labour Party seeks to substitute itself for broad social movements.

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The confines of the Labour Party's narrow political culture will only be broken by a transformation of union culture. In the past eight years industrial struggles have provided a focus for political struggle. Unions have been vital to defend workers from more assertive employers. The labour movement remains an important obstacle to Thatcherite restructuring, and the unions are beginning to respond to the new terrain with recruitment aimed at growing sections of the workforce.

But as yet this is not based on a recognition that the restructuring of the unions' role requires a strategic response. The recomposition of the workforce, the influence of new technology, the international competitive forces carried by foreign companies setting up new plants, the ideological and legislative attack on the logic and power of collective action, are not separate crises. They are a single, fundamental restructuring of the unions' position.

Collective bargaining is no longer about regulating predictable economic routines, but about setting the terms for the creation of the new order. Bargaining agendas have to be expanded to cover training, working time, and industrial democracy, if the unions are to effectively contest capital's terms for the creation of the new order.

The industrial agenda will have to be simultaneously a social agenda if the priorities and culture of unionism are to reflect the interests of women workers. Industrial struggles will have to have a wider political dimension written into them: they will only be won if unions reach out to speak for, and win the support of, a wider public.

The conduct of the miners' strike in South Wales and Scotland, the NHS campaigns, the activities of the Scottish TUC, are all examples of how the labour movement must operate at the centre of alliances in society rather than as a sectional force.

Political perspective

The Left can again command the times, but only if it develops a political strategy which generates a social coalition in support of a socialist modernisation on the new terrain.

Thatcherism and the private sector are creating their version of the new order by tearing down established 'demarcation lines', not just on the shopfloor, but throughout society, for instance between the private sector and the state sector.

The trouble is that much of the Left is still trapped within its own demarcation lines which divide economic struggles from social struggles; state action from private initiatives in society; individual choices from collective solutions; national policies from international issues. If the Left is to step into the new terrain it must break these political demarcation lines which it inherited from the old order.

A new left perspective cannot be a list of revised demands, policies or slogans. The Left's entire project must be refashioned: it has to develop a set of principles which should guide the organisation of the new order, of post-Fordist society.

The aim must be to renew a sense of social solidarity and common purpose, but based upon a recognition that society has become more plural and diverse.

The key to this is to develop a vision of democratic modernisation. These twin themes of democracy and modernisation would set the trajectory for society's development.

The aim would be to ensure democratic development in the broadest sense, through expanding decentralisation, diversity and choice, but within a reinvigorated culture of collective responsibility. To be popular and legitimate, socialist strategy must be driven from the 'bottom up' rather than brought in from the 'top down'. The state must encourage change from within society, not insert socialism into society from the outside.

Democratic modernisation cannot just offer collective solutions. It must give a clear place to individuals. It must guarantee a set of rights and entitlements to life chances, recognise the basic democratic importance of individual choices in consumption, lifestyle, housing and sexuality, as well as in politics. It must match the plurality and diversity of society and aim to empower people in a range of economic and social settings, from the home to the high street, the workplace, and the council chamber.

Modernisation would proceed within this democratic setting. It must be economically modernising, embracing the new technology revolution. It must be socially modernising, fashioning new forms of social welfare to match the needs of modern workers and families. It must be politically modernising to reform Britain's political structures to match a more plural, diverse society, in which there is a strong desire for greater decentralisation of state power. It must be internationally modernising. Rather than attempt to resurrect the power of the nation-state, it must seek international alliances to exert control over the international setting for democratic modernisation in Britain.

We take up these themes of democratic modernisation in the following four sections.

'British politics is caught between a depressing sense of paralysis and a defiant Britain-will-be-great-again nationalism'

The Economy

The Left has yet to establish its credibility as a force with a strategy to modernise the economy. This is a vital disablement, for it leaves the Left without a coherent strategy to match the new technology revolution and the internationalisation of the economy.

A key part of socialist modernisation must be the development of a new economic strategy. This would aim at a continuing modernisation of the economy to make it more internationally competitive. This is a prerequisite for rising living standards and more extensive redistributive policies. But the trajectory of modernisation must be directed by social goals rather than the interests of private capital. To ensure this, relations of economic power will have to be transformed through regulation, social ownership, economic democracy and state intervention.

Such a strategy faces several major problems.

There will be competing demands: investment will be needed to reduce unemployment, but it will also be needed to modernise the economy.

Britain's income from oil exports will decline in the next decade. But there are few signs that manufacturing industry is in a position to fill this gap through high-productivity, high-skill production.

The restructuring of the last decade has created new patterns of corporate power which will complicate the task of controlling the economy to social ends. In particular, control has further internationalised with the extending reach of multinational corporations and banks. It will be impossible to completely disengage from these international economic pressures.

Finally the Left needs to be clear what the means and the aims of the strategy are. Social ownership is in part an end in itself: to ensure the nation's assets are owned by the working majority rather than a minority. But in part it is a means: to achieve a different kind of corporate performance. The Left will only win support for its strategy if it lays out the benefits social intervention will bring, whether this is increased efficiency, higher investment in the UK, more spending on training, or tighter environmental controls.

The goals will differ for different kinds of businesses, for instance, whether they are public utilities, or internationally competitive manufacturers; large established companies or small innovators. In many cases social control will not exempt companies from market pressures: it should ensure that companies respond to these pressures in a different way. Working people demand value for money in the high street. They will demand the same as investors in socially-owned enterprises. Social control cannot be an excuse for inefficiency; it must develop efficiency within a social context.

The Left's strategy needs to be based upon the recognition that in the long run the British economy will only be as efficient and innovative as its units of production. Thus, the strategy needs to focus on modernising the productive, economic base.

This does not mean that macro-economic policy has no role. Managing the exchange rate, interest rates and private and

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public borrowing, will still be vitally important. In addition, the real productive economy will have to be insulated from disruptive, speculative, international capital movements, through taxes, quotas or direct controls on international capital transfers. But in the long run what matters is building a productive economic base.

Achieving this will require a mix of decentralised initiatives and strategic direction.

Innovation of new products and production processes will be crucial to the future strength of the economy. This requires more than lines of robots to make the same old products, for the same old markets. It requires attention to all aspects of a business from design through to marketing. Planners and civil servants cannot innovate new products through a grand plan. It can only be done on a decentralised basis by technologists, designers and managers within companies responding to changing demand.

The need for decentralisation in turn implies that the market will play an important role, simply because it is the best way to co-ordinate lots of economic decisions, and to ensure that production responds to consumer choices.

But the market left to itself creates unjustifiable inequalities; it does not account for the social costs and benefits of economic decisions.

Most importantly, private initiative through the market is incapable of tackling many of Britain's structural economic weaknesses. This requires a national strategy to strengthen the foundations of a modern economy – science and technology, research and development, education and training. Here the state will have to play a strategic role in combination with schools, universities, companies, local authorities, trade unions and pressure groups.

This raises the most troubling question for any left economic strategy.

Most of the economy's productive assets, which will be vital to the modernisation of the economy, are controlled by private companies. How can social control be exercised so that these assets are developed within a social economic strategy?

'To influence a single firm it will be necessary to influence the development of entire sectors'

Control

Control will not be achieved through a single policy. It will require a mix of measures to reshape the economy – through democratic regulation, social ownership, and other measures of economic democracy.

Traditionally left strategies have been based upon two ideas of power which are drawn from the old order. Firstly, that the central power lay with a company's owners, who could set the imperatives for the company's development. Thus a change in ownership would bring the power to set a company on an entirely different course.

Secondly, ownership of the high volume production units was central to the control of the remainder of the national economic flow line which was dominated by production. These were the commanding heights of the economy.

It is not the supposed electoral unpopularity of social ownership which demands a reassessment of the position, but shifts in corporate power in the transition to the new order.

Many companies' room for manoeuvre is limited, not by the directives of their owners, but by their position within their market sector – whether they can dominate, or whether they are dependent upon other companies.

In addition, in many companies and industries power has shifted away from production towards marketing and retailing. It is here, 'close to the consumer', that key decisions are being made about what should be produced. Production is losing its old dominance.

This has had important consequences for corporate power. In many sectors the key power lies with retailers and marketing companies, rather than producers. These are the new commanding heights of the economy. For instance, Marks and Spencer control much of the textile industry through controlling producers' access to the market.

On top of this control has internationalised. For instance, in the car industry the key company to control is not Ford UK – the largest producer – but Nissan, the smallest, most efficient producer, which is setting the pace which all the other producers have to follow. But controlling either will be difficult because both companies rely on highly integrated international operations; indeed this is true of almost every vehicle producer in Britain.

These developments set three criteria for any viable strategy. To influence a single firm it will be necessary to influence the development of entire sectors; that is, relations between companies, rather than single companies. It must take account of the shift of power away from producers towards retailers. And finally it must deal with the internationalisation of control.

A central element of the economic strategy must be more extensive and intensive regulation of particular companies but also entire sectors. This will be vital to influence power relations between companies, how suppliers and producers develop together, the process of innovation and to protect consumers and the environment from abuse.

It would also provide some leverage over a range of companies it would be difficult, if not impossible, to control through ownership. A key power a UK government would have over foreign companies wishing to locate or expand production, would be to regulate, or deny, their access to the market. Common European codes would allow control to have an international dimension often lacking in social ownership strategies.

Statutory regulation covering investment in the UK, purchasing, employment and training policies, and industrial democracy, would have to be fairly intensive. Regulatory bodies would have to become deeply involved in corporate decision-making to be effective.

But this regulatory framework, covering every major sector, could not be mechanistic. It would have to be a form of democratic regulation, to ensure that the regulators did not become completely ensnared by the companies they were seeking to regulate. Local regulatory boards could become organising points for campaigns by alliances of consumers, workers and the local community. Democratic external regulation would be accompanied by internal industrial democracy.

Thus democratic regulation could have a dynamic of popular involvement which is lacking in most static, statist notions of social ownership. It would politicise economic decision-taking.

There is an important corollary to this. As control over access to the market is such an important regulatory power, the strategy would have to command the support of consumers. Only with their support would it be possible to credibly deny companies access to the market.

But regulation alone would not achieve control. Social ownership will have a vital role, particularly of key infrastructures – telecommunications, electricity, water and gas – because they provide essential services which affect the rest of the economy. But the forms that social ownership takes need to be modernised.

If state corporations are established they would need to be tightly regulated, decentralised and in parts opened up to competition, to ensure they did not exploit their monopoly power as they undoubtedly have in the past.

Social ownership strategy should be aimed at a transformation of the culture of ownership and control, as well as being an instrumental economic tool. If the working majority are really going to own the nation's assets they have to feel it in their everyday lives, as tangibly as their building society accounts. The strategy needs to develop an expanding popular culture of social ownership.

For instance, legislation could be passed forcing the top 200 companies to make over 10-15% of their shares to workers' trusts, or wage-earner investment boards, or the state could take strategic stakes devolved to regulatory bodies. The strategy should include tough inheritance taxation to provide each 18-year old with a social capital stake.

To have a tangible sense of ownership people have to be able to sell their shares. To avoid this leading to a reconcentration of ownership, social capital markets would have to be established, separate from the stock exchange, through which individuals would be able to sell their stakes back to the state

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or to wage-earner funds.

This cannot be a 'left strategy'. It must generate and arise from real popular demands. In the next few years there will be considerable potential demand for such a strategy. Even the limited regulation of British Telecom has mobilised consumer disenchantment with the company. The wave of hostile foreign takeovers which will sweep the economy in the run-up to the creation of the single European market will lead to demands for state intervention. The growing saturation of traditional forms of saving and investment – pensions and housing – will lead to new demands for more direct forms of investment in the economy.

The Left needs to fashion a strategy which articulates these demands within a social economy strategy, as an alternative to enterprise culture and popular capitalism.

Social Strategy

A new social strategy must break out of the confines of the debate over the welfare state. The welfare state is underfunded. But the real crisis of the welfare state is a social crisis. It was erected on the economic and social foundations which have crumbled.

The social crisis is the product of two factors.

First, despite the rise of the welfare state, most welfare is still provided within families, or not at all. But the rise in unemployment, single-parent households, and women's employment, has dramatically altered families' capacity to provide welfare. Most women are no longer 'available' to care for dependents. In many households income for care has declined with unemployment and low wages. But in tandem social needs are changing and intensifying, particularly as the number of dependent old people rises.

This has produced a crisis because of the second factor: the failure of socialised welfare to adapt to the changes in family resources for welfare provision. There is a deep social contradiction between a welfare state fashioned in 1945, for the workers, families and dependents of the old order, their housing and social needs; and the needs of workers and families in the new order in the 1990s.

This suggests several themes which should guide the renewal of the Left's approach to welfare.

It cannot primarily be about expanding the welfare state through pumping in more resources. Social welfare provision has to be transformed, as well as expanded.

The key focus for this transformation cannot be the welfare state, but how income and the organisation of work combine to determine the ability of the state, families and individuals to provide for welfare.

Thus a new agenda must examine how the economy of work has to be reorganised – for instance, through minimum incomes and more flexible working time – to allow people the time to better provide for their welfare. It must not be about how the welfare state can accommodate to an organisation of work which cannot be changed.

This also means that welfare cannot simply be about state provision. Thatcherism has set up a simple dichotomy between private provision, which is flexible, efficient and driven by choice; and public provision, which is inflexible, inefficient and driven by bureaucracy. The Left must break through this dichotomy by stressing the ways public provision must work with individual, family, and collective initiatives outside the state, to deliver socially-guaranteed levels of welfare.

Finally this agenda cannot just be about helping people in poverty. It will only be possible to construct a new coalition in support of an expansion of socialised welfare – which will benefit the worst-off – if it also offers benefits to the better-off. This means the stress must be on universal, rather than means-tested, benefits.

The debate over welfare in Sweden is conducted in a much more positive way because most benefits are universal. Child benefit here is second only to the Royal Family and the NHS in popular esteem because it is universal.

The guiding theme for the agenda must be social citizenship.

'Despite the rise of the welfare state, most welfare is still provided within families, or not at all'

It must guarantee a choice over how a set of rights which make up modern welfare are delivered – rights to health, education throughout life, flexibility of working time, childcare and a reasonable standard of living.

We take three issues as illustrations of how this new welfare strategy would work in practice: unemployment, childcare and working time, and housing.

Unemployment

The best way to guarantee a reasonable standard of living, and thus welfare, is through providing reasonably-paid employment. Thus a vital part of the welfare strategy must be the reduction of unemployment.

The persistence of unemployment requires the state to play a major role in planning the provision of work, based on a high-quality training and employment programme which would offer a guaranteed place for anyone unemployed. This is in effect, a shift from the goal of full employment to the goal of a universal employment guarantee.

Beyond that, the links between economic growth, job generation and training for the unemployed have to be planned more closely. In the next year, for instance, more than 30 building projects worth more than £1billion each will start in the UK, but there has been no programme to train more building workers in advance.

The phased introduction of a minimum wage would push employers towards high-productivity, high-wage production, rather than low-wage production. It would contribute to efficiency as well as social justice.

Childcare and working time

Social provision is organised as if most women do not work, and thus can take care of children, the elderly, and the sick within the home.

The lack of socially-provided child minding, nursery provision, post-schoolday care for children, care for children when sick, means that by and large women still take this responsibility, as well as working.

A renewed welfare agenda must build upon the informal solutions which abound among networks of women, to provide a universal entitlement to socially-guaranteed childcare for any employed parent.

But this will not eradicate the strains of most women's dual shift unless there is also a reorganisation of working time. For work is still organised as if most workers are men without domestic responsibilities. Thus a range of measures to make working time more flexible would need to be introduced – improved maternity and paternity rights, sabbaticals, care leave and shorter working days.

Universal childcare and reorganisation of working time would appeal across the classes of working women. But it would disproportionately benefit the least well-off. It would be the biggest attack on family poverty since the introduction of child benefit.

It would help to free women from the burdens of the double shift and provide the basis for reforming the domestic division of labour between women and men. It could thus be part of a cultural and sexual reformation.

To provide for the myriad childcare needs, it would be best pursued through alliances between the local state and autonomous groups, which would be funded by the former but which would take responsibility for care themselves.

It would be a popular example of the benefits social control of the economy can bring – the organisation of work around domestic needs, alongside the needs of production.

Housing

A universal entitlement to housing could be financed through a single housing allowance, paid to homeowner, private tenant, or council tenant alike. This would replace mortgage tax relief and housing benefit, and cut across the housing divide by putting all householders on the same footing.

The local state must have a crucial role in providing housing for the homeless and people who cannot afford to buy. But this should mainly be pursued through genuinely democratic decentralisation, based on housing co-operatives, which

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would have much greater freedom to arrange for maintenance, decoration etc.

But in addition the Left needs to address the needs of those on below-average earnings who want to buy their home. For instance, a state equity scheme could be introduced which allowed people on below-average earnings to buy half a house with the local authority buying the other half. Over time the householder could buy out the state's share. On sale, the state could take out its share and return it to a fund to finance further joint purchases.

Mortgage tax relief means the state already has a massive involvement in the private housing market. A left strategy has to redirect the state's involvement to the needs of the least well-off, promoting an alternative culture of state-supported homeowners.

This is not a complete agenda. These proposals are illustrations of the kind of universalistic, non-statist welfare policy that could be applied equally well to health, education or care for the elderly.

People And Politics

An alternative social and economic strategy will only succeed with a parallel democratisation of political decision-making. Just as the inherited institutions of economic and social policy are ill-matched to the challenges of the new terrain, so too are Britain's political structures.

The Left must campaign for a system of political decision-making which matches a more flexible, diverse society, in which people have a strong desire to take greater responsibility for decisions which shape their lives.

Britain is one of the most centralised societies in the West. The dangers are evident in Thatcherism's authoritarian centralising of state power.

Thatcherite solutions rely on an alliance between the centralisation of state power, which symbolises 'taking determined action'; privatisation, which symbolises 'efficiency', and individualism and consumerism, which symbolise 'decentralisation and choice'.

Thatcherism's centralisation of state power, combined with privatisation, is destroying the middle tier of democracy which lies between the individual and the central state.

The Left's strategy cannot be based on an attempt to redirect the central state to new socialist goals. It cannot be a list of demands for state action.

The state cannot simply be occupied, it must be transformed. A socialist strategy must aim to establish a new relationship between the central state, decentralised democracy and individuals.

At the heart of this must be the decentralisation of state power, to ensure the state has to respond to the constituencies it is meant to serve. The Left should campaign for strengthened local government, regional government and national governments for England, Scotland and Wales, as well as an elected second chamber.

Similarly state services – education, housing, health and the public utilities – must be opened to decentralised control, through local elected boards and councils.

But this decentralisation must not be a new form of corporatism – of unions, employers and government getting together to make deals. That simply will not represent the diversity of interest among consumers and the community which need to have the major role in determining the needs services should meet.

The state's role must primarily be enabling. To enable people to come up with their own chosen solutions to problems through a plurality of autonomous collective organisations in society. The enabling state would have to be genuinely plural – it cannot be a subsidisation of leftwing causes. The aim would be to promote cultural and social change from within society, rather than relying on the state to insert change from above. We take two examples of how the enabling state might work in practice: football violence and child abuse.

'Peace, aid, ecology and anti-apartheid are all causes which have brought hundreds of people into political action'

Thatcherism's solution to football violence is strengthened state surveillance, through identity cards, tougher policing and stiff jail sentences. That kind of approach is not merely authoritarian – it will not solve the problem. For football violence is a problem of mass behaviour within society, which can only be tackled effectively from within society.

The Left's agenda should enable football supporters' clubs, local authorities, the clubs and the police, to solve the problem from within, by developing their own strategies for dealing with troublemakers. It must change the culture in and around football.

On child abuse, Thatcherism's solution is tighter surveillance of families and children. But what is required is a deeper cultural revolution in men's behaviour, and an examination of the resources available to women and children to escape from and control male violence.

Thus local, non-state solutions, involving women's groups, the Women's Institutes, charities, churches and voluntary organisations, could provide a social infrastructure of support and care which people could turn to, without plunging into bureaucratic state procedures.

The Left's aim should be to promote responsible self-regulation to give people the resources and tools to take control of the situation for themselves in alliance with the state.

In the long run, the political system and state power will only reflect the plurality of interests in society with the introduction of proportional representation.

But short of that, the state can be opened to control by more plural interests, through a strategy aimed at promoting self-management.

The International

The transformation since 1945 of Britain's place in the world is one of the most striking examples of the decay of the foundations upon which the old order was built.

A former great power has become a medium-sized European power. This is in part due to the rise of other economic powers, in Europe and the Far East. But in part it is the result of more pervasive forces which are diminishing the power of all nation-states: the internationalisation of the economy. And yet, at the same time, Britain still has a distinctive world role, formed by the legacy of imperialism.

This combination has produced one of the most powerful but least contested parts of the nation's politics – its schizophrenic national identity. In the face of internationalisation, British politics is caught between a depressing sense of paralysis and a defiant 'Britain-can-be-great-again' nationalism with powerful popular appeal.

This is a clear case of where economic strategy, and political culture, cannot be separated. It will only be possible to develop strategies which match the internationalisation of power, if there is a parallel transformation of Britain's national identity, our understanding of our place within the world.

Far from encouraging such a change Thatcherism plays upon the national schizophrenia. It stresses Britain's powerlessness in the face of international recession and competition. But it also plays upon the symbolism of making Britain powerful and independent once more, with its defiant anti-Europeanism, its little-England nationalism.

But the Left too has a considerable investment in the mythic power of national sovereignty. Most left strategy is based upon the assumption that if progressive social forces can take control of the national state, socialism will follow. Foreign influences are constraints to be resisted. Much of the Left's attitude towards the European Community has been informed by such thinking.

Reworking Britain's position within a changing international order, to break the cycle of paralysis and knee-jerk nationalism, will be a major part of socialist modernisation.

The key to this is to locate Britain's place within Europe. Increasingly, large businesses are becoming Europeanised, with cross-border mergers and trade expanding. Tourism,

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fashion and television are becoming increasingly European.

The Left must seek opportunities in this process by setting domestic campaigns and strategies within a European dimension.

Europeanisation may create the setting for people to demand higher standards in a range of areas. More integrated European production could lead to collective bargaining being aimed at higher continental standards of working time, pay, training, and industrial democracy. British social provision and environmental controls are much worse than those of most of our EC partners.

The creation of the single European market in 1992 will give these trends added impetus, but a particular form.

The shape of a more integrated Europe is being determined by international companies because they are able to act in a political void. There are no equivalent democratic institutions capable of controlling them. The Thatcher government's reluctant approach to Europeanisation, rejecting the establishment of strong European economic institutions, only increases the freedom of these companies.

The overriding aim of international socialist alliances must be to create a movement for institutions capable of democratically controlling European development. For all its failings, the EC will be the focus for this strategy. The Left must campaign for the democratisation of decision-making within the EC. But to underpin this it must seek out firmer multilateral links with European socialist and communist parties to develop a common approach to Europeanisation.

The Left's agenda must be to expand Europeanisation, rather than resist it. It should include European social policy, based on common laws and codes about rights at work; common industrial and regional policies; and a wider foreign policy which gives Europe a distinctive place in international affairs untrammelled by the United States.

The second major force shaping Britain's international role is the change in superpower relations.

The USA's transatlantic role is likely to become more problematic. The expense of the US commitment to Nato may become increasingly prey to isolationist pressures in the USA, and the need for retrenchment in government spending. The rising Pacific Rim economies, particularly Japan and South Korea, may become a more important arena than Europe for US policy.

In parallel, *perestroika* in the USSR is likely to have important repercussions for the Soviet Union's international role. The opening of the Soviet economy to greater international investment and trade will lead to a lowering of other barriers which divide Europe. This could open an alternative focus for political alliances. The full implications of *perestroika* for the shape of Europe will only begin to be felt in the next decade.

The USSR is likely to enter the International Monetary Fund, and along with India and China could become a focus for a new progressive international alliance, which could regenerate the United Nations and other international institutions.

The importance of these developments for British politics should not be underestimated. For the third major development around international politics in Britain has been the growth of a popular, progressive humanism around international issues. Peace, aid, ecology and anti-apartheid are causes which have brought hundreds of thousands of people, from all sections of society into political action.

They have their core principles of social solidarity and social responsibility which are one of the strengths of progressive forces in Britain. They are based on an explicit recognition of the interdependence of national struggles. No domestic issue, apart from the miners' strike, has generated anything like this kind of political response.

Any reassessment of the Left's position on disarmament must be set within the context of these developments. It must draw on the opportunities of Europeanisation, changes in American policy towards Europe, the energy of international campaigns in Britain, but most importantly now the changes in the USSR.

The most obvious aspect of the Gorbachev initiatives on nuclear arms is that they have opened up multilateralism as a genuine route to disarmament. Gorbachev's willingness to negotiate means there is no longer any excuse for Western multilateralists not to press ahead with disarmament.

Yet in addition the Gorbachev initiatives also make unilateralism more feasible. But only if the Left takes up the momentum of *perestroika*, the opening of the Soviet Union, to transform the basis for the defence and disarmament debate.

As links with the USSR grow, as political reform moves on so it will become more and more difficult for the European Right to maintain its imagery of the looming threat of Soviet invasion which is the key justification for keeping nuclear weapons.

The Left's response to these developments should not be to search for new formulae to stick into Labour's election manifesto.

The Left's aim must be to translate the international momentum of the Gorbachev initiatives into the domestic arena. It must campaign for a defence and disarmament policy, based on growing European-Soviet co-operation, and reject the imagery of the Soviet threat.

Such a political campaign would open up a range of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral routes to European disarmament and demilitarisation.

Unilateral disarmament of Britain's nuclear capability should remain part of the Left's strategy. But it should be accompanied by strategies for multilateral European moves, as well as bilateral moves to establish co-operative relations with the USSR.

Europeanisation should add another dimension to disarmament policy. US bases, for instance, will probably only be removed through developing an alternative European defence strategy, which does not rely in the United States.

'Much of the Left is still trapped within its own demarcation lines which divide economic struggles from social struggles'

The Party

The Communist Party has played a vital role in the Left's reassessment of its position in the wake of the crisis of the 1970s. However, the party has not escaped the pressures which have affected most of the Left. The bitter divisions within the party in the early 1980s reflected deeper questions about what the party's role should be.

The party needs to move into a new phase of political work. The analysis and critique of Thatcherism needs to be extended into a wide-ranging debate about how to develop the ideas and forms of struggle that would mobilise people around a modern socialist prospectus. This will require theoretical and ideological work.

But the party also needs to examine how its influence can be expanded within the institutions and movements of the Left, to expand this debate, and propagate it. How can the party's industrial infrastructure be rebuilt? How can the party take up the energy and politics of the new social movements, to appeal through new forms of struggle? How can the party's role be maintained given its size, and how can more people be recruited to the party? What is the party's long-term relationship with the Labour Party and other parts of the opposition to Thatcherism? These are among the questions that the party will need to address in the process of modernisation.

Socialism

It is important to locate this strategy along the road to socialism. Socialism will not be made in Britain in the 1990s or the first decade of the next century by this strategy. There will be distinctive stages in the development of society towards socialism. But the shape of that society will be prefigured in what socialists do now. The principles which guide socialist struggle must be consistent, but must gradually extend their influence throughout society.

Those principles are, at root, about a democratic, pluralistic self-managing socialism in which people take responsibility for the forces which shape their lives. It must be a socialism which lives and grows with people's everyday lives. For socialism is not centrally about a party, or the state, but about empowering people to take control of their lives. ●

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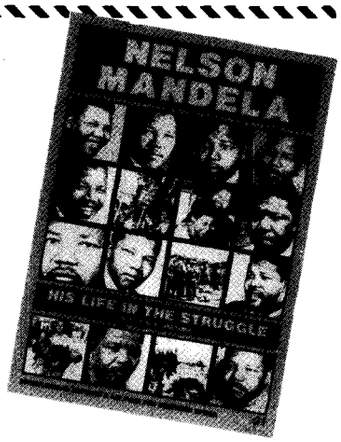

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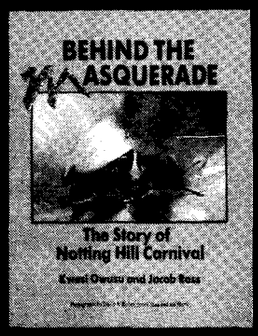

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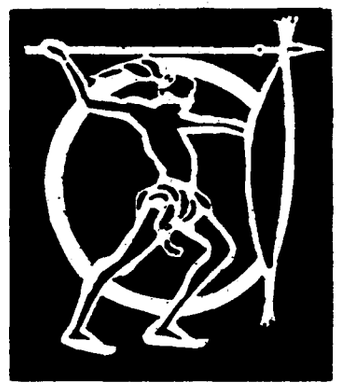

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Illustration: John Morris

The Mandela Moment

The Mandela movement has been *the* campaign of 1988. Like Sport Aid in 1986, it has vividly fired the popular imagination. **Mark Perryman** analyses the ingredients of Anti-Apartheid's success story

Nelson Mandela is in prison where? (a) South America, (b) South Korea, (c) South Africa. Provide the right answer to this *Daily Mirror* competition and your prize would have been a pair of tickets to the Mandela Concert at Wembley on June 11th. With one shrewd commercial move the *Mirror* revealed both the incredible interest in the concert, and the appalling ignorance about the man whose birthday it was to celebrate.

Five weeks after our lucky prize-winners went to Wembley we were provided with an answer as to whether the interest in the concert would affect the ignorance about the man. In an opinion poll commissioned by Anti-Apartheid 92% knew who Mandela was and 70% supported his unconditional and immediate release.

What makes this turnaround all the more remarkable is that it should happen now. Two years ago, the rising level of resistance to the apartheid regime in the townships meant South Africa was rarely out of the news. The resistance, coupled with the brutal use of force and censorship under the state of emergency, created all the conditions for a broad and massive anti-apartheid campaign in this country. It didn't happen. And yet two years later, with South Africa out of the immediate news, here we have a momentous upsurge and outpouring of support for the anti-apartheid cause.

This wasn't, at least in its immediate context, a reaction to a liberation movement on the move or an oppressive regime on the rampage. The solidarity campaigns have all been reactive in this sense, including the biggest we've seen in postwar Britain, the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. Twenty years ago, in 1968, hundreds of thousands marched for Vietnam, inspired and mobilised by the Tet offensive in January of that year. In 1988 an

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even larger movement has been, in a sense, manufactured by turning what could have been an all-too easily forgettable birthday into an unmissable media extravaganza. The worlds of communicating and campaigning were brought, if only for a moment, spectacularly together.

Four parts of the Mandela campaign worked to produce such a moment. First and foremost, there was the concert itself. A brilliant coup, not just in filling Wembley to capacity but also the occupation of millions of tv screens throughout Britain and across the world. Secondly, the morning after the concert ended the Mandela Freedom March left from Glasgow Green. Traversing Scotland and down the length of England the 25 marchers, each symbolising a year of Mandela's imprisonment, set a furious pace throughout their trek. In their wake they left an immediate sign of a campaign that could have a life of its own in local communities hundreds of miles away from the world of Wembley. The march never made the headlines but that simple link was a very important part of the campaign. Thirdly, when the marathon march reached London it became a triumphant parade into the biggest rally ever mounted by Anti-Apartheid. Some 250,000 filled Hyde Park and were faced by a stage that wouldn't have looked out of place back at Wembley. From the colourful backdrops and the huge video screen to the sheer size and volume, this was the world of the stadium meeting the world of the rally. The speakers, among them Archbishop Tutu and Sir Richard Attenborough, were for once audible because the PA system wasn't designed so much for them but for the highlight of the afternoon, Simple Minds. Fourthly, throughout the campaign advertising was treated as a key way to project its ideas and ideals. The publicity focus remained relentlessly on Mandela and the avenue used was one of those by which people expect to be fed their daily messages, advertising in the national press. The form legitimised the content, that is the rationale of the advertising medium and this was a campaign that used it as widely and as professionally as resources would allow.

But why has Anti-Apartheid so spectac-ularly succeeded now when it has largely failed in the past? The answer will not just be found in the recent imagination of the mix of the old and the new, but also in the reason behind that past failure. This lies in what was the founding basis of the movement, and what for 30 years has dominated all its work, the sanctions campaign. On this question we have seen the successful international isolation of Mrs Thatcher, a situation which will be intensified should Dukakis win in November. Domestically, meanwhile, she has found herself facing a sizeable minority supporting sanctions.

But Thatcher's position is a dynamic one and it has consistently prevented the supporters of sanctions from breaking out of that minority status. Constantly on the offensive, never ducking the argument, Thatcher puts the case for a positive and reforming dialogue of engagement with South Africa. She pictures her opponents as passive isolationists incapable of provoking peaceful change in South Africa. Her argument cannot win over those convinced of the impossibility of reforming apartheid. But it is not those that she is interested in, she wants to win the middle ground. Anti-Apartheid's hitherto overwhelming emphasis on the sanctions issue has steered it away from that middle ground, leaving far too much of it for Thatcher and her themes of engagement and dialogue. The Mandela campaign has begun to show how that ground can be won and majority support for sanctions secured.

The marginalisation of the campaign from the ground it could win was further illustrated when the boycott campaign was launched into a particular popular arena, sport. In this instance, the campaign was a force from the outside, often appearing to be more anti-sport than anti-apartheid. It is a campaign that isn't informed by the political and cultural world that sports people inhabit, nor does it offer the means by which sport can positively express support for the cause in its own terms. Instead it is treated as the passive and ignorant bystander. In this way the weakness instead of the strength of the campaign is stressed and the opposition to 'interfering politics' can be galvanised by the supporters of apartheid in a world in which they are decidedly in the minority.

Sanctions are an absolutely vital part of the isolation and defeat of apartheid. They are a practical way in which the West can materially aid the liberation movement within South Africa. But they are the potential product of a much more generalised sense of moral outrage at the inhumanity and irrationality of apartheid. A plurality of forms needs to be created to express this outrage. These must provide space for the majority who, while opposing apartheid, do not as yet either support or identify with the demand for sanctions. The breadth and depth of this outrage opens up a middle ground on which to counter Thatcher's case for dialogue and engagement. It is on this middle ground that the campaign will be won or lost.

The Mandela campaign worked because the previous focus on sanctions, boycott, and isolation was totally transformed into a new emphasis on personality and celebration. And the new focus demanded a combination of a creative use of traditional forms of campaigning, marches and rallies, with new forms drawn from the worlds of popular entertainment and communications.

The personality was Mandela himself, the figure who more than anyone else dramatises the issue of apartheid. It was in this dramatic form that Mandela was constantly being projected. Three factors made up that extremely powerful projection and instilled it with popular appeal. First, the nature of his supposed crime. He is imprisoned for his ideas. He has not used arms or committed acts of violence. He is in no active sense a 'terrorist'. He was a lawyer and politician who believed that it was morally and tactically correct to use violence to overthrow apartheid. Strong sentiments, but quite distinct from employing those violent means oneself. Mandela, in this way, is both a symbol of struggle and at the same time remains untouched by the inevitable violent and tragic implications of such a struggle when it is armed.

'The stadium represents a passion that is expressed through the music and theatrically overblown gestures of the performers'

Second, there is the extremely close support Mandela enjoys from his wife and daughters. The commitment, loyalty and affection of Mandela's family provides us with a very basic and familiar form for millions to identify with. Third, there is the age of Mandela, the incredible duration of the sentence for a 'philosophical crime', and the moral stature that Mandela now enjoys by what has to be frankly described as the nobility of his suffering. We think of Mandela in terms of the contribution he will make to the construction of a new South Africa: that is the scale of his moral stature.

But these factors in themselves would not have been enough. The brilliant connection, self-consciously made by Anti-Apartheid, was the one with Mandela's birthday. Everyone has one day of the year that is theirs, their birthday. It gives us the chance to celebrate and not to feel self-conscious about it in the face of the inhumanity that Mandela has been forced to suffer. We can celebrate with his family, feel part of a wider family and most of all we can 'party'. It makes us feel important too, because you can't have a successful birthday party without guests.

This combination of personality and celebration provided the way into a concert that conspicuously exuded those values: a worldwide media event, reaching in one day an unbelievable 10 billion people. This was a spectacle that immediately became immersed in the life and soul of the nation. It was a spectacle from the world of stadium rock. The stadium represents a passion that is expressed through the music and the theatrically overblown gestures of the performers. It represents a sense of occasion, that's why people willingly, even happily, queue for days on end, and pay £25 for a ticket. Most of all, it is a world of celebration, right down to the 'Hello Mum' banners and the rhythmically clapping hands held

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high above tens of thousands of heads. That's why every time the call was made from the stage the stadium rang out with the response – loud and confident. That's why every time the cameras swung towards the audience there was a wild clamour to appear on screen. This was an audience with a keen sense of its own belonging.

However, it wasn't Wembley alone which made the spectacle. It was the 10-hour, live transmission which transformed it into a *popular* event, reaching into the consciousness of millions. At the outset the idea of global tv coverage was not uppermost in Anti-Apartheid's collective mind. But as the organisation unfolded it found itself in a new cultural universe of agencies, production companies, promoters, managements and the like. This intervention had to be informed and transformed by the worlds and values of the arena being addressed. The sheer organisational and practical pressures of mounting an event on this scale forced this transformation. It came about through the deep strategic involvement of figures from the world of music in the unfamiliar world of campaign politics. Past interventions around such figures as Zola Budd or products like Paul Simon's *Graceland* album had never been forced to change in this way. While they were aimed at the world outside politics, they were conducted in the language and form of a campaign untouched by the worlds they were seeking to change.

As a consequence, the event evolved into the biggest and best concert of the year, and as a result the tv companies literally could not afford not to televise it. Consequently, the attacks on the live transmission of the event by the BBC, and the extraordinarily high profile which it gave to the event, were themselves marginalised. These attacks were led not by the government but by the lonely far-right supporters of apartheid on the back benches. The battle was fought out in the abstract; was it or was it not a political or a musical event? On this ground Anti-Apartheid could not lose. The cause did not obscure the culture, they embraced one another. The essence of Mandela and his imprisonment, through the celebration of his birthday, had itself become an entertainment event. Cause and celebration were indistinguishable. The opponents, meanwhile, distinguished themselves as antiquated killjoys lost in the mists of parliamentary politicking, while everyone else was simply intent on having a party.

The Mandela campaign worked because of the mix of the old with the new, the traditional forms of political campaigning with the worlds of entertainment and communications. Its success was rooted in a heritage of popular music with a political conscience. The soul music of the civil rights movement of 60s America; the peace, love and understanding of the late 60s; the punk agitation of Rock Against Racism; Amnesty International's *Conspiracy Of Hope* tours. For decades no campaign has been complete without its musical wing and since Live Aid that music has found a form through which to place the issues it seeks to represent on a world stage.

'The opponents, meanwhile, distinguished themselves as antiquated killjoys, while everyone else was simply intent on having a party'

What was new about the Mandela concert was the rare sensitivity it displayed for the cause at hand. The music and the message had a genuine relationship shown by the showcasing of the best in black music – both the stars and the styles – presenting rap, reggae, soul and jazz alongside the rich diversity of African music and dance. At the same time it showed us that the world of committed entertainment doesn't have to stop short at music. It was also a day of unabashed humour and the incongruous but impassioned seal of approval bestowed by the parade of celebrity compères. In this way it learnt from and built upon Live Aid. But this was a moment for a movement. Live Aid did not need a campaign in that way for it was already part of a wider charity movement. Mandela's freedom demands an ongoing campaign and it will have to be one in which this present spectacular moment can lay a basis for many more fusions of the political and the cultural until the life of the Anti-Apartheid Movement itself is transformed into something new. ●

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Olympic Spirit Of Sparta

The Olympic Games are the biggest sporting extravaganza on earth. For the participants, they are about the pursuit of ultimate achievement. For the rest of us, they promise competition, showbiz, patriotism, wall-to-wall tv coverage and more, in three weeks of high-emotion excitement. To mark Olympics '88 we look at some of the more controversial aspects of Olympism and the quest for sporting perfection. Below, **Harold Jackson** assesses the nature of the modern Olympic spirit upon which the Games are founded

Did anyone in the small crowd gathered at the Sorbonne in 1894 think to question Baron de Coubertin's assertion that reviving a Greek quadrennial sporting competition was the road to world peace and international harmony? Just one voice more realistic than the non-athletic baron's might have spared the 20th century its repeated doses of leap-year chauvinism and ill-will.

An elementary precaution could have been to make a brief study of the original Olympic Games. Modern history has enveloped them in a golden glow – bronzed young gods striving to wrestle one another into amicable submission before returning to the exercise of democracy and the spread of enlightenment and culture.

The Greeks, far from concerning themselves with international relations, originally barred anyone but their own nationals from the competition. For decades the runaway winners were the Spartans. Their training for potential competitors? Non-stop preparation for military service, requiring boys to steal or to starve, to submit to bracing flagellation, and to participate in the *krypteia* – the regular terrorisation of the local slaves in night-time raids designed to hone the lads' soldierly skills.

Even when the Athenians managed to calm life down a little, participation in the games was restricted to a minority of a minority. Horsemanship could only be displayed by the nobility, and no more than about 10% of the rest of the population was eligible for the athletic competitions. By the time the tradition was severed by Emperor Theodosius in the 4th century, it had largely been corrupted by professional sportsmen. It somehow lacks the appropriate quality for a template of *kalos kathagos*, the idealised being of Platonic aspiration who matched personal wisdom with civic excellence. If you had to pick the one modern organiser nearest to the old traditions the choice would probably fall on Adolf Hitler.

It is small wonder that the present games are rent with politics, nationalism, petty-mindedness and bureaucracy: the oddity is that anyone is surprised by it. The quintessence of sporting competition is, after all, small-mindedness. How does it add to global happiness and well-being that John Smith can run 200 metres three-hundredths of a second faster than Bill Brown? Would the course of human development be changed if the Kenyans beat the Bulgarians in the men's wrestling?

The Olympic ideals proclaimed by the Victorians were suspect from the beginning and were put into practice in a way that should have disillusioned everyone. One merit of organised sport is that it can sometimes offer people with small prospect of the good life a chance to break away from their poverty. Boxing, to give just one example, achieved it first for the 19th century European poor and later for the American black.

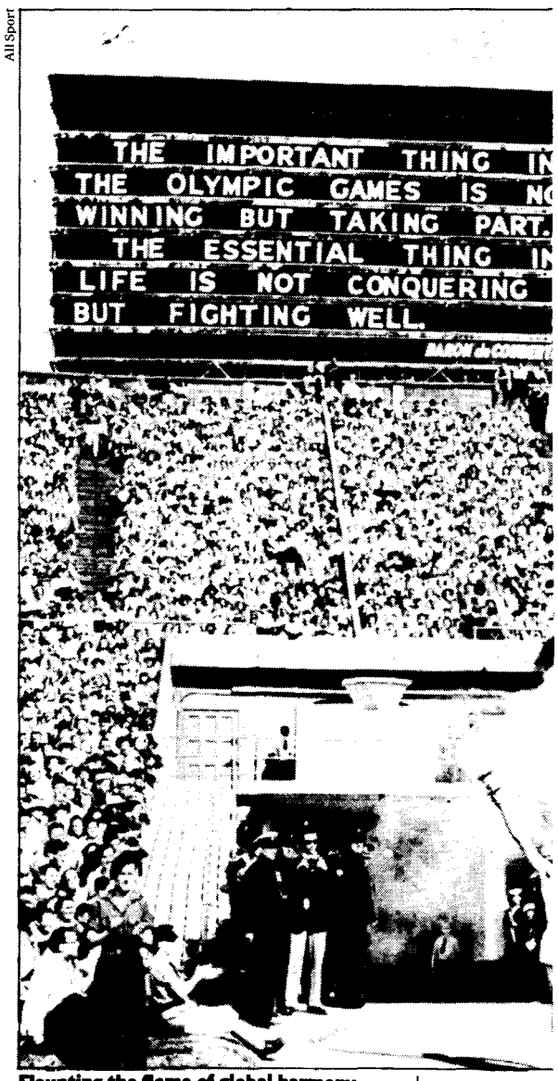
But de Coubertin's version of the Olympic ideal immediately penalised such upstarts. If athleticism facilitated an escape from backbreaking farmwork or industrial slum, it certainly brought no place in the Olympic family. That was strictly confined to the leisured or to the deserving poor – those, that is, who didn't seek to turn their skill into cash. The one sport specially developed for the Olympics and avidly supported by the baron was the modern pentathlon, designed to test the military skills required to carry a message through enemy lines. Stuffed with peaceful symbolism, that is.

So the perception of the Olympic spirit was always largely mythical and certainly never informed decisions taken in the smoke-filled rooms of the national Olympic committees. Committees are not about activity: they are about territory and power (in a word, politics). It seems improbable that any Olympic committee session since 1896 ever devoted much of its time to the practicalities of sporting performance – whether the Fosbury flop was better than the Western roll or whatever.

So sporting politics were built in from the outset. Much was made to turn on the issue of amateurism: even mere coaching was initially treated as a breach of the code. Then, once interest had spread beyond the original dozen nations, the committees' concerns rapidly expanded to encompass which competitors were to be counted as truly national representatives, the methods of scoring, and the sports to be included in the games. Each carried a huge baggage of national *amour propre*, grist for every local political mill.

The familiar pattern of the modern

All Sport



Flaunting the flame of global harmony

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games was set by the Nazis in 1936. Joseph Goebbels had the gumption to see that a vast international gathering could combine with instant communication to publicise the glories of the regime. Hindsight holds that Jesse Owen's performance blew it all out of the water but no evidence sustains that belief. The mixture invented in Berlin in 1936 has been faithfully reproduced at every subsequent Olympics. There was an opportunity to foreswear this course in 1948 at the XIVth Olympiad in London but the pattern of nationalistic fervour and unremitting propaganda was maintained. Only the victors in the second world war (and those who had stayed out of it altogether) were deemed fit to be invited. No one cared to raise the question of international peace and harmony with Germany and Japan.

With the Berlin blockade underway the cold war was at its height and Stalin chose not to confuse his citizenry by meeting the Western powers in anything resembling friendly rivalry. The games were thus inevitably dominated by the United States and became, willy nilly, an extension of its foreign policy. The Helsinki games took place in the middle of the Korean war and, as always, of the American presidential election. The permanent conjunction of these two events has ensured that international political tensions have dominated each Olympiad. President Carter's tenuous hold on the White House as the Iranian hostage crisis ground on led to his precipitate withdrawal of the US team from the Moscow games. He had to be tough with someone. It was inevitable that the Soviet Union should subsequently get its own back on President Reagan and counter his constant rhetoric about international lawlessness by raking up the well-recorded crime rate of Los Angeles.

This year's competition will undoubtedly be as popular as ever with billions of viewers but, for all but a minority, the Olympics are not about sport but about theatre. Who, for example, were Spyridon Louis, Michel Teato, Thomas Hicks, and William Sherring? Now long forgotten, they were the winners at the first four Games of the core Olympic event, the marathon. What does the average person remember about any Olympic marathon? The fact that in the Vth Olympiad Dorando Pietri of Italy finished first in a state of total collapse and was then disqualified because an official helped him over the line. Not one person in 10,000 could say who actually won in 1908.

Organised sport does not take place in a social vacuum: it is an expression of national priorities. The local crown green bowls team may be in it for fun but governments and large commercial organisations do not invest huge sums in sporting activity just to keep the punters happy. They reckon it gives them a return, however intangible it may seem.

The Los Angeles games certainly did the commercial sponsors proud. The eventual profit was $215m, 20 times greater than had been anticipated. None went to inner city development or other social causes. Every cent has been pumped back into American sporting activities ready for the next round. If anyone ever doubted the nature of the enterprise, the Supreme Court issued a definitive ruling last year that the US national committee has exclusive commercial title to the word 'Olympic'. It is hardly surprising that the US is now bidding for the 2004 Olympiad.

The no-less-effective opportunities of global theatre have been demonstrated by such diverse participants as the Palestinians responsible for the Israeli deaths at the 1972 Munich games, black members of the US athletics team, and Olga Korbut. In this last case it could reasonably be argued that the slight figure of one teenager did more to change Western perceptions of the Soviet Union in the early Brezhnev years than could Radio Moscow's entire output. Whatever bread was cast on Ms Korbut's water came back thick with butter as worldwide television audiences oohed and aahed.

But the galloping advance of information technology seems to be generating a ricochet effect. The bombardment of viewers and readers with non-stop newszak appears to leave many feeling that they understand less and less about more and more. So we are seeing the retreat into medieval certainties. Fundamentalisms of all sorts are back in vogue: they do make life wonderfully straightforward. Though they would be surprised to discover it, Islam and West Ham have a lot in common. The Great Satan is where you seek him, as a politician in the White House or as a soccer team at Craven Cottage.

It would be cheering to think that history will turn in its tracks and that peace and goodwill really will break out. Sadly the more probable message for the XXIVth Olympiad is that it will be business as usual. The Games are likely to take place in an atmosphere of mean-minded nationalism and commercial avarice. The two Koreas will continue to despise one another, the scoring in the gymnastics will be as biased as always, and the depressing sound of nation refusing to speak its piece unto nation will be beamed relentlessly round the world. That, after all, is the Olympic spirit. ●

Hera To Heresy

Who or what, precisely, are top performance sportswomen trying to be? **Celia Brackenridge** examines the gender identity confusions involved in competitive sport

A woman marathon runner staggers, exhausted and dehydrated, across the finish line to a barrage of criticism ... a sprinter grows her diamond-studded nails to such extraordinary lengths that she has to change her starting technique ... a million tiny schoolgirls (encouraged by their parents) abuse their bodies with excessive training and starvation to achieve a distant resemblance to Olga Korbut or Nadia Comaneci ... a discus thrower faces the humiliation of a sex test before she can compete ... the tragi-dramatic content of Mary Decker's famous fall is enhanced one hundredfold as she is carried off the track in tears in the brawny arms of her shot-putter fiancé.

You might think that any self-respecting feminist would make for the hills in mid-September, creeping quietly away from all this – the biggest, brashest capitalist show on earth. But what of those feminists who are actually sports enthusiasts? How is Olympic sport – elitist, competitive and narcissistic – reconciled with feminist principles? For whilst sport has for decades ignored women, defining femininity and athleticism as mutually exclusive; feminism has for decades ignored sport, defining it as just another oppressive male preserve.

Growing numbers of women are not merely taking part but aspiring to excel in sport, adopting the values of robust, physical competition in an individualistic and patriarchal arena. Such athletes demonstrate strength, commitment and physical prowess against the odds, as the international sports community often denigrates, undermines and opposes their involvement.

What do top women athletes want from their sport, and what or who are they trying to be? How are these heroines influencing future generations of sportswomen?

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When set in a wider context women's involvement in the Olympic Games becomes even more surprising. In Britain, sportswomen receive less coaching and technical backup than their male counterparts, and have fewer opportunities and worse resources for training and competition.

Even the law enshrines bias – the Sex Discrimination Act exempts sports in private clubs (where women frequently suffer from restricted access and no voting rights) or those based on strength (thus facilitating sexual apartheid).

The traditional stereotype of the sporting woman as muscular and masculinised has been used repeatedly to deter women from participation, instilling fears of loss of femininity and sexuality crisis. Even those with the talent to succeed often fail to make it to the top, falling prey to expectations of femininity and 'good motherhood'.

When a woman has a good idea it is usually ignored, appropriated and/or distorted by men. Such was the fate of the original Olympic Games dedicated to the Greek goddess Hera. The Games of Hera are thought to have predated the ancient Olympics of BC 776 by at least 300 years.[1] The events were characterised by a spirit of mutual respect, with age group races to reflect the representation of Hera as goddess of women and women's sexuality in youth, maturity and old age.

Since then, women with Olympic aspirations have been systematically excluded, ridiculed and humiliated by the man-made rules of the International Olympic Committee, not least concerning the ignominy of the sex test.

Blue reports that the test, first used in the 1968 Olympics, initially comprised visual inspection by doctors 'inside and out' and was later modified to a chromosome examination from a smear of cells.

Aside from ethical and medical arguments, the assumption underlying the sex test – that women who succeed in sport must be male – seriously underestimates the sporting potential of women. Public opinion, it seems, loves a winner provided she doesn't upset or challenge 'normal' standards of sexuality.

Despite a steady increase in women's participation since the start of the modern Games in 1896, men still outnumbered women by more than three to one in 1984. Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Games, said, 'Women have but one task, that of crowning the winner with garlands.' The task may have changed but his viewpoint persists.

Fewer events are open to women – the first women's marathon was 'allowed' in only 1984. Women's sports are extensively coached and regulated by men and, crucially, images of women in sport are presented, mediated and interpreted by male journalists.

But while feminism might cast the Olympics as an example of male hegemony, this ignores the fact that most women Olympians have freely chosen their roles. Few who 'go for gold' would challenge the Olympic ideology, even though many 'apologise' for their athleticism, defending their public sexuality by wearing glamour-clothing, ribboned hair or extrovert jewellery. Some women appear to have been totally absorbed into the corporate jungle of the Games, subjecting themselves to all the worst excesses of drugs, psychological and dietary abuse and sponsorship deals.

The concept of male hegemony traps feminists into false assumptions about the blanket oppression by men of women in sport. But shifting the analysis to one based on 'hegemonic masculinity' can help us to understand how particular models of sporting behaviour and values oppress both men and women. In this analysis the gender identity of women Olympians (and indeed, male ice skaters) is no longer contradictory.

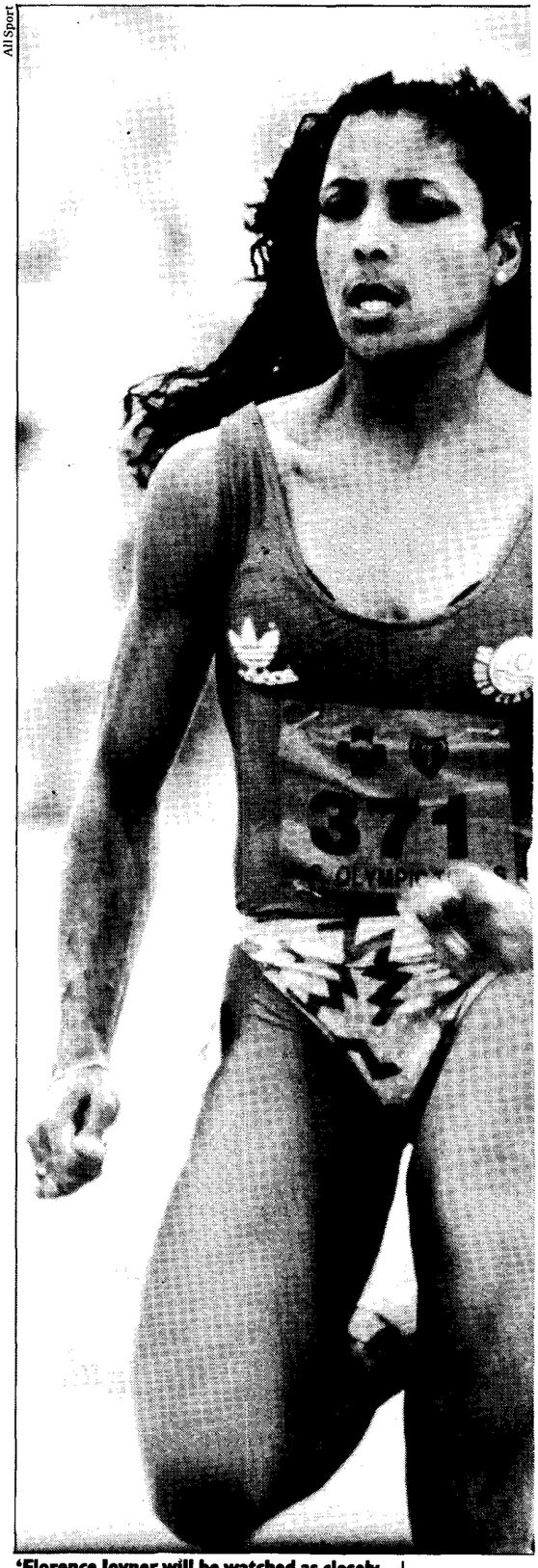
A few 'sports feminists' *have* begun to examine sport in this way, acknowledging its potential as a source of confidence for women whilst also criticising the excesses of the Games.

Synchronised swimming, a women-only sport, epitomises the gender contradictions of the Olympics. As with ice dance and women's gymnastics it conforms with those activities approved for women by Western heterosexual, patriarchal society. Yet it also demands exceptional dexterity, cardiovascular endurance and co-ordination, not to mention creativity. Is it a sporting aberration, a sop to male voyeurism or a serious extension of the female Olympic repertoire?

The Olympics present a fascinating cultural and political indicator of wider gender issues: as increasing numbers of women become involved in the Games, feminism can no longer afford to write them off as just a kind of feminist heresy. ●

1. Adrianne Blue, *Faster, Higher, Further: Women's Triumphs and Disasters at the Olympics* (Virago, 1988)

All Sport



'Florence Joyner will be watched as closely for what she wears as how fast she runs.' *The Independent*, 13.8.88.

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Drug Runners

The case against the use of drugs in sport is pretty open and shut. Or is it? **Dr Joe Collier** looks at the contradictions thrown up by the tough anti-drugs policies

Two simple principles govern the anti-drugs policies of all the major sporting regulatory bodies: that participants should not take any drug that might damage their health or any drug that might give them an unfair advantage over other competitors. Lists of 'banned' drugs are published by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and by the various international and national controlling bodies. Any athlete found taking a banned substance is liable to face a period of disqualification, which varies from sport to sport, but may be lifelong.

But among those who have to deal with the practical matters of drug-testing and decision-taking, these policies have been regarded as so simple that they border on the naive, with implementation becoming inconsistent and illogical.

The question as to whether a drug should be banned because it can be used for cheating cannot be taken in isolation. Already hundreds of thousands of pounds are spent on the health of our Olympic hopefuls.

Few contestants will escape receiving ultrasound, heat treatment, massage, manipulation, injections (permitted) of local anaesthetics or corticosteroids and the pills and potions (permitted) to relieve pain, reduce inflammation, and to treat infections that might interfere with training or competition.

But surely all this attention provides unfair advantage over the athletes of yesteryear, over those in this country now who are not eligible, or who cannot afford, such support, or those in other (emerging) countries where many of these facilities will not be available.

There can be little doubt that such expert attention, plus specialised training, gives athletes a real advantage. Ironically, however, there is no convincing evidence that the drugs on the banned list can do the same. Studies have shown, for instance, that beta-blockers do not help elite athletes in the precision events (rifle shooting, archery), and anabolic steroids do not improve muscle strength.

Dealing with the drugs used for cheating is only one principle of the policy. The second, and possibly more important, issue is whether drugs put athletes at risk. Many of them certainly can, and the stimulant drug amphetamine, which is not only a drug of dependence but can also kill by suddenly speeding the heart, should certainly be listed. But what of the other drugs? Long-term use of anabolic steroids in men can affect fertility, skin complexion, liver function etc, but so too can the oral contraceptive in women, and these have never been banned. Smoking and alcohol are much more dangerous but these too are not banned; their use is even encouraged in sponsorship deals.

Paradoxically as the elite athletes have become more professional so public health campaigns have addressed the public, encouraging them to see sport as fun and healthy. Sport has become a means of preventing illness or recovering health: there are exercise regimes for patients recovering from heart attacks, cricket for the blind, athletics for the mentally handicapped, olympics for paraplegics.

Many of these sportspeople will take drugs regularly as part of their everyday lives, for without them participation in sport would be impossible. These people are just one extreme of a continuum which stretches to the Olympic athletes, but through that continuum official attitudes towards the use of medicines changes imperceptibly.

But if medicines are useful in one group – and many of those amateur hobbyists with heart conditions will be taking a beta-blocker – then why should that medicine be banned in another?

Certainly competitors, like anyone else, should not take drugs of abuse or use prescription-only medicines supplied on the black market. Similarly they should be prohibited from taking drugs that clearly endanger their lives. But if a drug is required for a legitimate health or medical reason, this should be permitted whatever the status of the athlete.

Nor is this an insignificant consideration: many international-level competitors in events such as rifle-shooting, bowls, equestrianism, will be older than the average track athlete. Their general fitness or physical prowess is frequently different from that demanded of the athletes. They may well receive 'normal' medication in their daily lives.

It is clearly unjustifiable for top-level sportspeople to take drugs *solely* to improve their athletic performance. But this, baldly-stated, oversimplifies the dilemmas. For instance, it is now recognised that ultra-fit women lose calcium from their bones so fast that at 20 some have skeletons as weak as women twice their age. Imagine the dilemma if it were discovered – and this is a possibility – that the only way to reverse these changes would be to give anabolic steroids. The sports physician might be very tempted to prescribe them.

If policies are to be capable of implementation and if the notion of sport for all is to be taken seriously, then regulations must be universally applicable, scientifically and medically justifiable, and applicable to participants during events and training. ●

Back To The Garden

I am moderately interested in sport. I go to the occasional football match, I'm happy to spend 10 minutes sneering at British tennis players and I have scored 842 not out in a game of back garden cricket. Therefore at 3am on October 2 when the Seoul marathon is finishing I shall certainly be in front of my tv. I may even have switched it on.

And yet the prospect of the Olympics fills me with apprehension.

Here's the trouble: there are too many different sports. Switching on the Olympics is like nipping down to the grocer's only to discover you're in a vast and incomprehensible shopping centre. 'Floor 14 for the volleyball sir.' I want the athletics. I don't want sailing, I don't want hardball, I don't want show jumping and I don't want the commentators who go with it all. The majority of commentators are well-coiffeured, mindlessly enthusiastic and irredeemably bland. Mike Smith ought to be one (thinking about it, he probably is). Their crassness sustains *Private Eye*, their world-view stops at 'sport and politics don't mix' and worst of all they provide tv impressionists with hours of dreary material.

Commentators during the Olympics become like supply teachers, talking airily about subjects they've only been given that morning.

I say put an end to their misery! Put an end to our misery. Abandon all the sports except athletics. On second thoughts abandon the Olympics altogether and let every sport just have its own world championships. Then, perhaps, I can get back to the back garden. I'm looking forward to being 2000 not out before the end of September.●

Arthur Smith

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Striding Star

British medal hopes are pinned on Linford Christie, one of the world's fastest sprinters. Kolton Lee talks to him as he prepares for Seoul

British sports fans have had little to crow about this summer.

Our footballers left the European Championships in disgrace, having performed embarrassingly badly on the field, while booze-crazed and wild-eyed football fans leered, lurched and slugged their way off the field. England's cricketers who once bestrode their world with grace and precision now stumble and clatter to ignominious defeat. Suffice it to say that for us Wimbledon again disappointed.

And so to athletics. This year's Olympics in Seoul have seen the country feverishly searching for its stars.

On the press: 'It appeared in *The Sun* that I said, "If I was white I'd be a hero." I went berserk'

Well, the feverish search could do a lot worse than skip the Crams and Thompsons, whose glitter has dulled a little of late, and alight on another track athlete. Linford Christie.

Christie is 28, he's 6'2", he weighs 13½ stone and he's currently the third fastest runner on earth.

Born in Jamaica, he came to England with his parents in 1967. Although he claims he could read and write by the time he was five, his nine year flirtation with the British education system saw him pass out of Canberra High School in west London's White City with the grand sum of three CSEs. His later comment, 'I don't think the curriculum was very good,' is given weight by the fact that he now has 5 'O' levels gained during part-time study.

The next few years were then spent on a City and Guilds electronics course, looking into the backs of televisions, and working for the Co-op department store in accounts.

An all-round sportsman at school, it wasn't until 1979 that Christie ventured onto an athletics track at the west London stadium. By this time Christie was 19 and although relatively late to get into the sport, as he says: 'It was the best time to start. There are more rewards in the sport now . . . more recognition. People pay more attention to athletes now.'

His talent even at 19 was obvious. His coach for the last nine years, Ron Roddan, says quite bluntly: 'I knew he could be a top sprinter after about a year because he'd got the build. But when he first started coming to sessions he was a lazy bum. He was just a playboy. He liked running but didn't want to work at it.'

The more circumspect Christie muses: 'It took me a while to get into it. I used to go to the track to train but if the session was hard I used to go home or sit in the canteen playing dominoes . . .'

Two things convinced Christie that he had what it took to go right to the top. Firstly, his coach's conviction that he could be a world beater. Roddan became increasingly exasperated with Christie's casual attitude to training and the possible waste of so much talent. In the end an ultimatum was issued along the lines of 'either turn up for training or don't bother. Stop wasting my time.'

All Sport

Linford Christie: Never looks back

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But what really convinced Christie that he had a talent that could be nurtured into greatness was the number of times he would defeat British international sprinters in club meetings. With little of the punishing training that keeps top athletes leaning on the boundaries of physical capability, Christie was matching them stride for stride or beating them. In 1982 he decided to make a serious go of it.

The breakthrough came in 1986. This was the year that he gave up full-time employment with the attitude: 'I've got to be number one. And I've got to be that much better than anybody else so that it's a distinctive number one.' Christie won the European Indoor Championship gold medal for the 200m. For the rest of that season he never looked back, defeating the Soviets, the Americans and all of his British contemporaries. Last year he broke the UK record for 100m and is currently ranked third in the world behind the massive talents of Canada's world champion Ben Johnson and the US quadruple Olympic gold medallist, Carl Lewis.

The '86 championship win instilled in Christie the only thing he lacked. 'I put in a good winter of hard work and I just kept running best times. And that gave me confidence, that was the missing ingredient. I had the talent, I'd done the training and this was the final ingredient.'

But success on the track has not always meant success off it. As Christie prepares for this year's Olympics his composure has been ruffled by some abrasive experiences with the tabloid press. *The Sun's* recent news story of Christie's apparent brush with the law some eight years ago and their continuing preoccupation with his exploits has left him annoyed.

'It appeared in *The Sun* that I said, "If I was white I'd be a hero." I went berserk. Even if I thought that, I wouldn't say it because that would be cutting off my nose to spite my face.

My attitude to the press in this country is that somebody once told me that for every person that likes you there'll always be two people that don't. The press just count as my two.

When you're young you never see yourself as being top at anything. You live your life as you want to. But later on, when you've grown up a bit, you realise what's going on and you change. You change your environment and you try to better yourself. But then you find that while you're doing that, the press build you up and then it gives them great pleasure in knocking you down.'

But Christie's experiences are not unique among leading athletes and while his coach says with a wry look, 'You do seem a bit more vulnerable when you're off-white,' to the sort of stories that have dogged him recently, Christie shrugs them off: 'They're just another obstacle. They make me stronger. I don't need the press because when I run on television people see me and what I do and that's all that matters to me. If I can't cope with all this pressure now, then later on when I'm older I'll never be able to cope with this kind of pressure or any other. This is all a part of growing up and being able to handle yourself.'

What concerns Christie more is how his position as a role model is affected: 'The press are not only doing me a wrong but they're doing the youth who look up to me a wrong.' The mantle of responsibility that goes with being a celebrity sits easily on his shoulders. 'It's nice to be a hero but it also makes me think twice about what I'm doing. But some of the youth, black and white, may think they would like to be like me. However, after the press's hounding they'll think "bugger this", if this is what the press does to you.'

The politics that go hand in hand with being black in Britain is something that Christie does not want to discuss as an athlete and this springs from his fundamental belief that sport should be a sanctuary away from politics. His 'I never majored in politics' statement, however, belies his realisation that while athletes are often asked to stage political boycotts of major international events, international trade goes on as usual. He finds this hypocrisy from politicians odious.

The most recent major boycott was when the African countries and some Caribbean islands stayed away from the 1986 Commonwealth Games in Scotland. Their action was taken in protest at the inclusion of South African runner Zola Budd in the English team. There was a feeling at the time that perhaps the black athletes, who made up almost 25% of the team, should also boycott the event: 'I felt an affinity with the African countries and I also feel an affinity with black South Africans but pulling out wasn't going to do anything. The games still went ahead. Athletics is just used in this way because it's an easy target. We train bloody hard and therefore every four years that it takes to prepare yourself for the major championships, the Olympics, is four years out of your life. I don't think four years out of my life is going to make any political situation any better.'

On boycotts: 'I don't think four years out of my life is going to make any political situation better'

This year's Olympics look as though they will be the first boycott-free games since 1976 and Christie is optimistic: 'My plans for the Olympics are going very well. I've been running consistently well all year which is unusual for me and things are looking good.' Things are looking so good in fact that Christie aims to tackle three events; the 100m, the 200m and the 4 × 100m relay.

But he is making no predictions: 'Only God knows about tomorrow but I've got as good a chance as anybody. And provided I make the final, even if I come last, it won't be for want of trying'. ●

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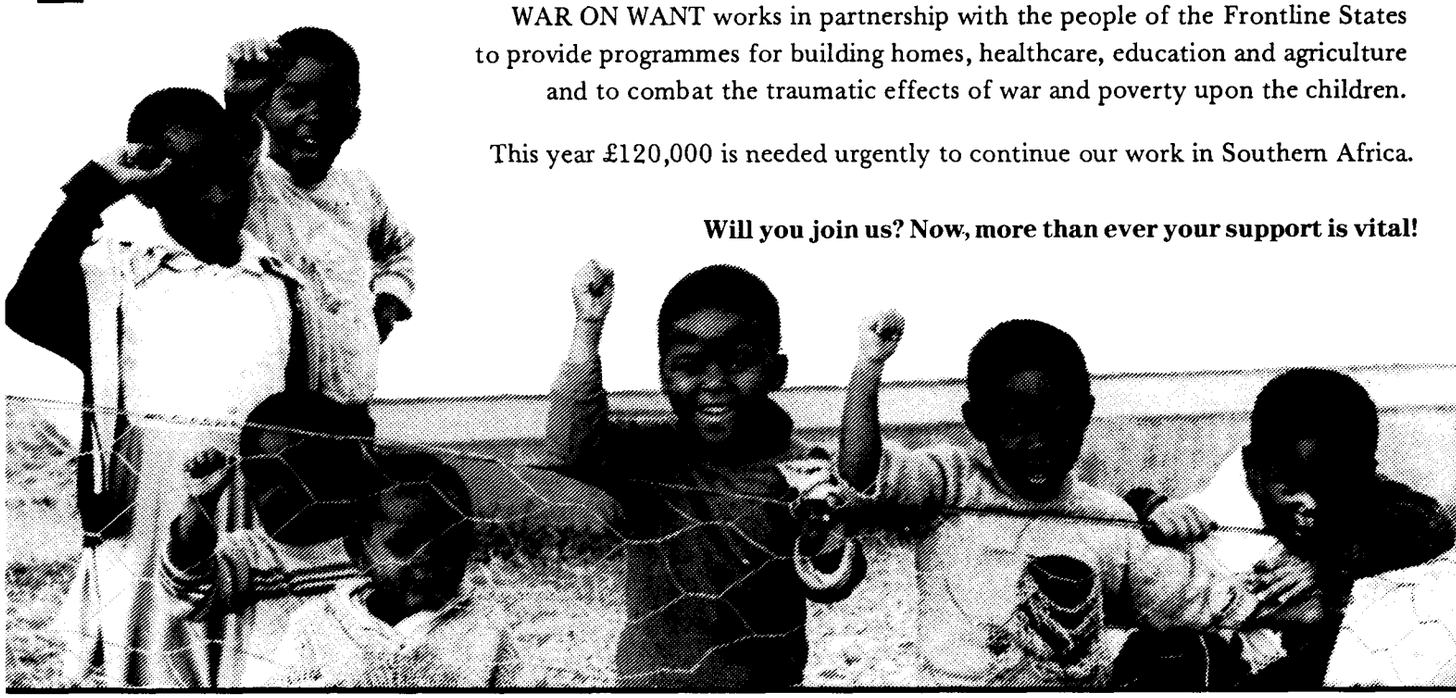

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It's a record-breaker: Jarre's spectacular 1986 laser lightshow in Houston, Texas

Light Fantastic

London's Docklands are the setting for one of Jean Michel Jarre's multi-media laser lightshows. Mark Sinker stands back from the glare of the spectacle and finds it impossible not to be impressed

May 15, 1970. Pink Floyd played a 2½ hour set at the Crystal Palace Garden Party. With fireworks. With a 50-foot inflatable octopus rising from the lake. A multi-media rock extravanganza in a tradition they'd inaugurated themselves. And it poured with rain and the volume of the speakers killed all the fish.

There's the spectacle and then there's The Spectacle, and from The Spectacle there is no escape. You will be entertained. For the sake of the numbers. In 1986, Jean Michel Jarre played in Houston, Texas, broadcasting his electronic jingles over the city, lighting up the sky with his laser lightshow. 'The biggest gig of all time' according to the *Guinness Book Of Records*, attended, willingly or not, by 1.2m people. How many of them actually wanted to listen to the composer's meaningless electronic hymns to space-age banality is not recorded.

On September 24, Jarre, who has only played four live shows in his career to date, will perform in London. It will not be a run-of-the-mill visit, paying court to his day-to-day fans (he may not have any day-to-day fans). *Destination Docklands – The London Concert* will be staged at the Royal Victoria Dock with the assistance of the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC). It will be seen by an estimated 2m people.

Lasers will bounce off the clouds, giant barges will ferry choirs and orchestras hither and thither, projectors will flash images 'inspired by the story of the Docklands' on to handy high rise buildings, fireworks will struggle to be convincing beside their hypermodern pyrotechnical descendants, local people will get work, local business will get a boost, local art will be highlighted in the sky, and the maestro will surpass himself.

Charity chic has snowballed towards some kind of tolerance limit in this year of the Living Rock Dead. Caring consumption and nostalgia obviously belong to each other in adult pop language. Pink Floyd were successful in binding together the dynamics of the avant-garde art event with the pleasures of financial success, while appealing to the 'socially-aware' public with benefits in 1966 for *it* magazine, Zimbabwe and Oxfam.

I once had the odd fortune to attend the wedding of the second daughter of King Hassan II of Morocco. In her honour, Hassan threw a three-day party, and spent one of those days standing in a royal box as the Representatives of the People of the Regions of Morocco filed past, in their thousands, leaving suitable gifts.

He stood there for some six hours without a break. It was breathtaking – *forever*. And it became clear, after a long while, that the boredom had a purpose. The spectacle is magnificent because it is magnificently boring. The day is marked as utterly special. All there is is its own event-hood. Ceremony to celebrate ceremony.

Think of the privations, the vulgarity, the endless draggy dullness of these representations of rock's Hugeness, from Woodstock through to Live Aid. Is there really such a big difference? They stand for the state of the social as a monolith – like capital punishment and the Great Exhibition, their purpose is to demonstrate power and capability, no more. All the other things, excuses like raising money, deterrent, inspiration, are irrelevant.

And it's impossible not to be impressed, even if you only end up angry after you have been. Fascination is inescapable, precisely because all you have to do is to be there (and then to remind yourself, every now and then for the rest of your life, that you were). *Destination Docklands* means nothing, but plenty of people will see it for free, so who's complaining? Funnily enough, given that it's going to be heard four miles away, almost nobody yet.

Borough councils and local police are obviously involved at an early stage with the planning of such a thing. Potential objectors, such as Connie Hunt of the People's Plan Centre, which incorporates the Newham Docklands Forum and is no lover of the LDDC, seems quite excited: 'The majority of the community welcome it,' she told me. 'As you might imagine, a lot of objecting goes on down here to various things. And there's a few objecting, but only a very few. And we've been saying they shouldn't be objecting. This is just the kind of thing we've been crying out for. It'll liven the area up, bring it a bit of attention.

One objection was that it would upset the elderly. And the council offered to take any of them that wanted, away for the weekend. But most of them said no, they wanted to see the whole thing.'

We could get all huffy and high and mighty, and try and generalise from this apparently amiable acceptance of noise invasion and showbiz trivialisation. We could talk about mini-

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Nurembergs, the harnessing of crowds and power through industrial sound, light and manipulative magic. There's a case to be made against this kind of passive involvement in technological display.

If the Docklanders aren't going to make this case, Class War will. They hate yuppies for not being punk rockers and they hate Jean Michel for not being one, so they'll cheerfully and inaccurately claim that *Destination Docklands* is the ultimate yuppie bash. They

Jarre: Flash image

may – if their dialectical chops are in order – argue that such a blandly uncritical glorification of space-age science is part of the whole military-industrial con-trick that the nuclear lobby and NASA have pulled on the world since the 40s.

But it's daft to fuss that much about it. Consciousness won't be raised, but it won't be misled either. Jarre's understanding of progress is so cartoonishly shallow that everyone sees through it. There are only two things remotely of interest about him: his father was the great film score composer Maurice Jarre, and his wife is Charlotte Rampling. Oh, and he's staged the biggest (and therefore most boring) gig ever. ●

Deviant Dance

New innovations are changing the image of the dance world and attracting a new audience. Ellen Cranitch explains the popularity of the classical *Kirov* ballet and that of *DV8*, a company at the forefront of Britain's New Dance movement

Men in tights with bulging thigh muscles, anorexic women skimming across the stage, a multitude of swans – this is many people's idea of ballet.

They think of a form of expression that is bound by technique, that depends upon an opaque vocabulary of movement and is preoccupied with the idea of beauty.

Ballet is seen as an archaic art form that can only be enjoyed by an elite minority. Indeed ballet originated in the courts of the Italian Renaissance and flourished at the court of Louis XIV where it was performed exclusively for and by the nobility.

This view of ballet fuelled a reaction in the mid-70s embodied in the New Dance movement. New Dance deliberately challenges the assumptions of ballet. It sees the issue of sexual politics as paramount. Where 'woman' in ballet must be passive and beautiful and her body held up to display, in New Dance she is an initiator and comes in every shape and size. New Dance is anti-technique, favouring more natural movement which is often expressed through sequences of contact improvisation – a self-consciously political form. It asserts the individuality of the performer against the featureless conformity of the ballet corps.

One of the most controversial dance companies to emerge of late is Lloyd Newson's *DV8*. Last year this company's first work, *My Body, Your Body*, based on Robin Norwood's book *Women Who Love Too Much*, examined how men view women and women's bodies and the cost of accepting traditional stereotyped roles.

One of the images from the work depicts the women, a seething tide coursing relentlessly up and down stage, sweat streaming from their bodies, in pursuit of their man. Forcing a furious energy they finally catch him only to discover that he is a dead weight that they are obliged to carry around.

The annual Dance Umbrella Festival, which promotes new dance works, has increasingly featured the work of choreographers such as Newson and nurtured a new audience.

If this is the current dance audience how did a classical company like the *Kirov* virtually sell out its recent summer season? The answer is that ballet, as represented by the *Kirov*, is also attracting a new audience.

The *Kirov* transcend the clichéd image of ballet. Their Leningrad training has given them a supreme technical mastery which frees the audience from thinking solely in terms of technique. Movement is not seen as technique overlaid with expression; it is expressive movement. The body moving in space distils an emotion or an idea.

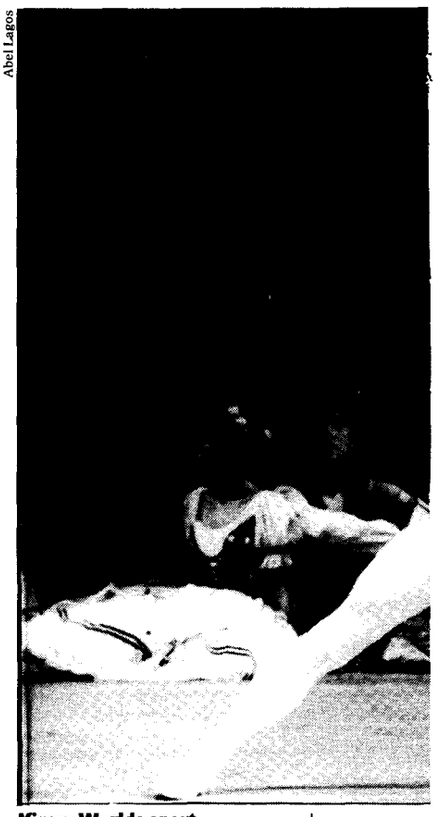
During their performance of *Giselle* at the London Coliseum the atmosphere was electric – a stark contrast to the placid composure of most audiences for British ballet. *Giselle* concerns the impossible love of a peasant girl for an aristocrat. Following her death the Count visits her grave where she appears to him.

Balanced against him she arches her back and dips towards the floor in a plummeting arabesque. He is passive, almost motionless. The two dancers are so close physically, yet worlds apart. Their proximity only serves to tantalisingly emphasise the enormous gulf between them, Giselle and Albrecht, peasant and aristocrat, woman and man. The dancers infused this familiar *pas de deux* with a fresh vitality and clarity of meaning. Her body's yearning extensions expressed the same tragedy

Eleni Leoussi

Newson's lonely men

Abel Lagos



Kirov: Worlds apart

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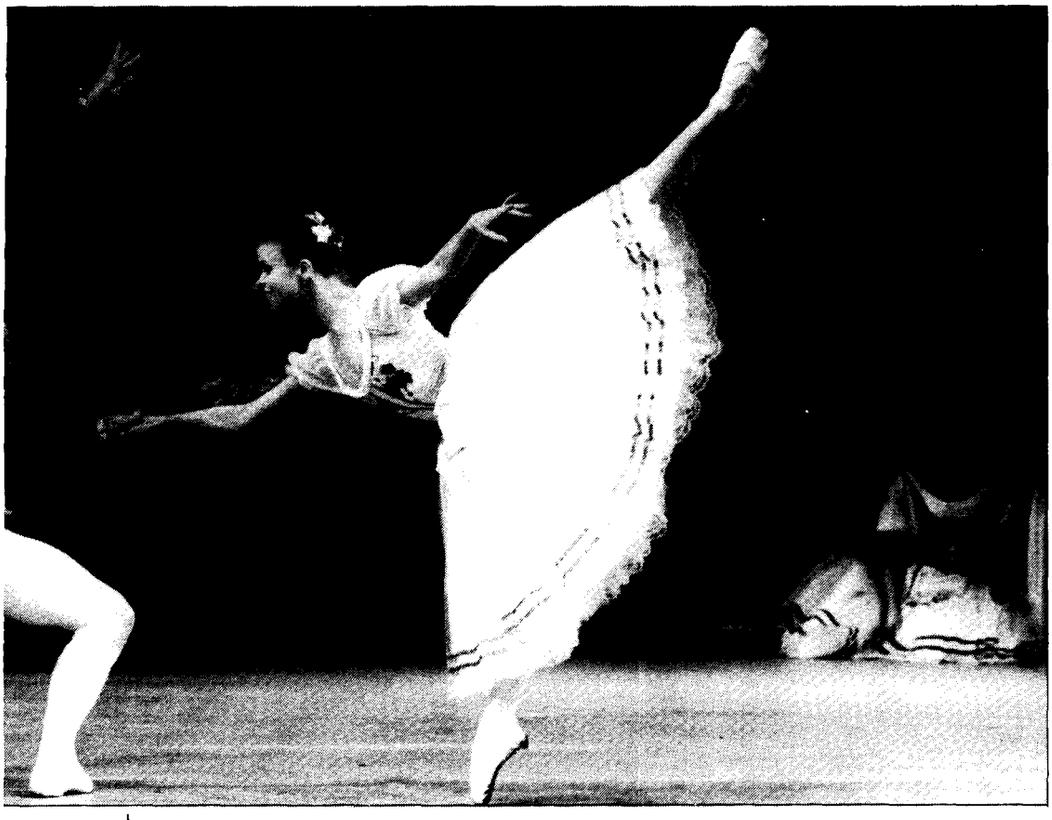

explored by *My Body, Your Body*, the tragedy of the woman who loves too much.

The *Kirov* ballet has shown some of its more fossilised British counterparts that by revitalising and reinterpreting traditional works a new audience can be won.

Newson's *DV8* is characterised by a willingness to experiment with form and content. The company's latest work, *Dead Dreams Of Monochrome Men*, which examines male sexuality, is a quieter, less declamatory work than *My Body, Your Body*. It will be premiered in Glasgow in October.

The work was inspired by a period Newson spent in the company of two gay men from the USA who were visiting London. They detected a degree of harassment unlike anything they had ever experienced in New York. This underlying element of violence threatened their expression of their sexuality. Newson set out to explore through physical theatre what happens to men in private when they cannot express their spontaneous gestures in public. The cast for this new work is entirely male.

The setting is a bed-sit. This room becomes a landscape of lonely men as, one by one, the cast pass through acting out their private rituals.

However, not all new forms of dance have the boldness or originality of *DV8*. Newson believes that dance needs entrepreneurs if it is to be popularised. Michael Clark created a new audience not only through his use of fashion and music but also by the vigorous promotion of his work. *DV8* video their work to reach out to a wider audience. Similarly, the energy and initiative of the Entertainment Corporation, in bringing the *Kirov* over and tirelessly advertising them, has contributed to creating a new audience for ballet.

Although for the most part the audience for ballet and for new forms of dance does not overlap, companies like *DV8* and the *Kirov* should ensure that both continue to rise. ●

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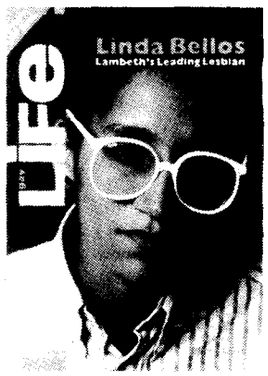

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Sailors in revolt: Battleship Potemkin, one of Eisenstein's greatest works

Russian Cuts

The first major exhibition of film maker Sergei Eisenstein's work opens at London's Hayward Gallery this month and moves to Manchester later this year.
Philip Hayward assesses the influence of this most revered of directors

Sergei Eisenstein is now firmly lodged in cinema's hall of fame. Feted for classic works such as *October* and *Battleship Potemkin* he is seen as one of the giants of world cinema. And rightly so. But despite his unassailable status there's no denying that his work has lost impact over the last two decades. What once appeared to burst from the screen with clashing geometries and dynamic edits now looks rather more demure. Instead of being revered as a seminal figure, he is now seen as more historically prescient than actually influential.

His films are still the same of course, it is just that the stylistic devices they employed are now something of a standard ingredient in a wide range of media forms such as tv adverts and pop videos. Few if any of these are deliberately 'Eisenstinian', whatever the film school training of their makers. It is rather that the styles he originally formulated have now been developed in different contexts to different ends. While Eisenstein's use of particular editing effects and image compositions are still striking, they now seem more commonplace to viewers who simply take them as early manifestations of today's current media styles.

Of course this reading is largely a *mis*-reading. In terms of the director's intentions, his devices were no mere formal trickery but rather attempts to manipulate film style to produce what he called at various times a 'montage of attractions' or an 'intellectual montage'. This notion of montage, now more commonly referred to as editing, was the key aspect of Eisenstein's approach to film. He viewed editing as a way of creating new synthetic meanings rather than simply linking actions in the smooth narrative style developed by Hollywood cinema.

Eisenstein's strength also lay in immaculately-shot action sequences. Mixing long shots with dramatic close-ups and symbolic montages, he brought an extra dimension to the drama and action in his films of a kind still lacking in all but the most accomplished of contemporary cinema.

But despite his undoubted talent, originality and cinematic successes, much of the film theory he wrote no longer appears to possess the resonance and accuity it was once attributed with. Although various more recent film makers have both cited his theoretical work as an influence and have produced tributes to his achievements, such as the sequence Godard included in *Les Carabiniers* in homage to *Battleship Potemkin*, actual evidence of an Eisenstinian 'school' seems thin.

This lack of a continuing tradition is to a great extent a reflection of the drift of politics since the early days of the Russian Revolution. Eisenstein's greatest works concerned mass revolutionary struggle against state tyranny and showed the workers as a force uniting to overthrow their oppressors. Such film topics are somewhat thin on the ground in the West today. Contemporary Hollywood cinema rarely builds films around groups acting collectively, preferring to rely almost exclusively on the individual as a centre of interest and the star as centre of the film.

Even in the contemporary films of the Left, the old collective effort can no longer be hymned so resolutely, since their battles have hardly been as successful as their Russian predecessors. Instead of the revolutionary heroism of Eisenstein's works, the struggles of the contemporary Left are far more cogently represented in the fragmented inquiry of films such as Chris Marker's *Cat Without A Grin*. It is perhaps not insignificant that it is only the work of some of the Latin American directors of the 60s and 70s, such as Glauber Rocha, still fired by a faith in the revolutionary power of the masses, which most capture the feel, if not the precise textual codes, of Eisenstein's work.

If anything, Eisenstein's international recognition has led to an over-estimation of his work as a whole. Overpraise by the international academy of film critics has led to even his flawed later films such as *Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan The Terrible* being elevated as examples of Russian revolutionary cinema more deserving of scrutiny than other powerfully inventive films of the period such as Kozintsev and Trauberg's *New Babylon*.

The major exhibition of his work, currently at Oxford's Museum of Modern Art, will obviously continue his canonisation as revolutionary film maker *extraordinaire*. But hopefully by contextualising his films against his writings and early work with the *Proltekult* theatre, it will show the originality and talent of a major film maker fortunate enough to live in inspiring revolutionary times. ●

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Jungle Books

Shirley Conran's Savages and Celia Brayfield's Pearls are two of this summer's blockbusting best sellers. Chris Savage King enters the jungle of money, sex, passion and intrigue and wonders if publishers are really giving women what they want

The 1988 women's best sellers bid a fond farewell to glamour and plunge headlong into the world of adventure. There's something here for everyone: a touch of historical romance, political and familial intrigue, escapades in south-east Asia, and financial wheeler-dealing. There's a little bit of sex, but on the whole, rather more violence. The 'blockbuster' has become its own rationale, marketed with an arbitrary and exclamatory array of tempting descriptions – 'sex and money', 'passionate', 'raw', 'escapist'.

The evacuation of an explicitly women's sphere occasions a shift to violence as key focus. Conran's **Savages** *(Pan, £3.99 pbk)*, in a drastic thematic leap, favours full-frontal attack. The jungle, traditionally the site of male adventures, becomes a site of spiritual and physical purgatory for her group of heroines. Brayfield's **Pearls** *(Penguin, £3.99 pbk)*, in timid retreat, keeps the onus of 'adventure' for the men. The women deal with violence alright, but of a tediously predictable emotional and domestic nature.

Broad scope leads to short shrift in many areas. Both novels creak and rattle with hastily culled encyclopaedic information, lacking the adhesiveness of thoughtfully presented facts or the resonance of literary perspective. We are offered history, but it's the stuff you missed at 'O' level. **Pearls** proceeds by way of flashbacks in which characters' lineages are traced. Drawing on historical depth rather than social breadth, there is no actual progress either literally or figuratively. It's not politicised history, still less women's history which throughout the novel remains remarkably freezed.

Revelling vicariously in the worlds of the rich and privileged, Brayfield's protagonists, sisters Caroline and Monty, lose their inheritance early and are craftily disguised as any or every woman. They romp through a series of dramas – child abuse, marital rape, wife bashing, disastrous love affairs – propagating the notion of an enduring feminine sensibility, not by the quality of the emotions presented which are pretty mechanical, but by dint of their relentless emphasis in plot space. The women's social positions ricochet wildly in the course of the narrative, yet their temperaments – whether rich or poor, upper class or putatively classless, whether good wives or high-powered career women – remain emotionally tremulous, inveterately masochistic, throughout.

Women are there to help each other through crisis but men dole out the principal professional and emotional prizes. Caroline, a financier, gains her success at the cost of her 'whole sensual faculties' (sic). Monty marries a rock star who 'teaches' her to love herself and whips her into a frenzy of gratitude with some virtuosic cunnilingus.

Conran's heroines are made of hardier stuff operating dynamically in the here and now. They begin as the dissatisfied wives of rich oil magnates but, in a staggering episode of collective wish fulfillment, their husbands are blown to bits by terrorists. Divested of wealth and status, the women are forced to retreat into the jungle and fend for themselves. Working collectively, they discover hidden strengths and self-determination but shed the ruthless individualism adopted in their roles as rich men's wives. The process raises unprecedented questions. 'D'you suppose', asks one, 'that women only act natural when there *isn't* a man around?' And there they are, gamely knifing antagonists on sight, building rafts, and killing, cutting and eating snakes and rats.

Much of the horror of jungle life and lore is conveyed in the gory terms of a giggly child's nightmare fantasy: cannibalism is contemplated at one point. Yet Conran's scenario provides a serviceable metaphor for women's struggles in more mundane areas of life. The women's mixed responses – brutality in their survivalism, sentiment at their losses, physical vitality and vulnerability, comradeship mixed with conflict – are never allowed to gel into programmatic archetypes, whether in the cause of critique or celebration. The melodrama sparks off analogies which allow the reader's imagination room to manoeuvre. The context of **Pearls**, by contrast, is so earnestly literal that the reader just trails along wearily behind.

Descriptions of the south-east Asian location of both novels owe much to the tourist industry. Both authors tend to refer to their locations in the hushed tones of fashion writers describing the new collections – a fine eye for detail and quality, but everything ultimately an object of visual consumption. Conran at least undercuts this view with that of the jungle as trial and site of transformation – itself a provocative opposition. The outlook in **Pearls** is less encouraging. Caroline and Monty's real mother, it transpires, is a Malaysian ex-prostitute. She was seduced and dumped by their father during the war. Having infiltrated the Western underworlds of nightclubs and prostitution, she contrives to wreak havoc on their father's reputation in order to drive him to suicide. So far so good. The Third World Strikes Back...?

No chance. On discovering this plot, the daughters haul her in for reckoning and then blow the whistle on her. The fact that she has anonymously helped them out at crucial stages in their lives is conveniently forgotten. Sisterhood's alright as long as it's 'natural' sisterhood and you're white and working within the law. The real mother's appearance looks set to expose the lie of inclusiveness – familial and occidental – on which the narrative depends. But the mysterious 'other', having been ransacked for its exotic mystique throughout the text, is designated 'evil' and carted off by the British police.

In terms of altering consciousness, popular culture has limited means at its disposal. Its very popularity is predicated on its value as escapism and 'pure' entertainment, its ease with conservative ways of seeing blended with conventional values. Yet feminism's widespread aims have achieved many personal and political gains for women which are now infiltrating the mass media, however deflected or displaced the images. **Savages** exemplifies this. For all its surface ludicrousness, Conran's novel prickles with impulses owing much to the spirit of Greenham. **Pearls**, alternatively, is dusted down and reconstituted *Mills & Boon*.

Conran: Pearls of wisdom

The print run of **Savages** is 540,000; that of **Pearls** a mere 15,000. Perhaps the publishers know what women want, and perhaps women are finally getting it. ●

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History For Tomorrow

Children Of The Arbat
Anatoli Rybakov translated by Harold Shukman
Hutchinson, £12.95 hbk

Children Of The Arbat is not a literary innovation or a great work of magic realism but it is a major novel in what might be called the tradition of monumental importance. The idea of monumental importance sounds stuffy and pretentious to English ears, which prefer irony and understatement or narrative accounts of the everyday. But this is because of England's own loss of significance. Meanwhile, some themes remain central to world politics – one of them being Stalin and Stalinism. Which is what this novel is about.

Rybakov began it in 1966 but was able to publish it only under Gorbachev. He refused to release it abroad alongside other dissident literature of the Brezhnev era, for it is a definitely Soviet book. It attempts a truthful account of the experience that formed the Soviet Union. Yet it remains loyal to the tragedy of that experience – rather than condemning it as foreign.

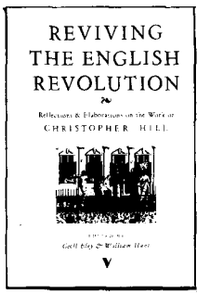
The Arbat is a historic quarter of central Moscow, and the 'children' of Rybakov's epic are a group of young people who have been to school there and been neighbours.

The novel tells the story of what is, in effect, the year they graduate into life: into jobs (or exile) and have their first affairs. The year is 1934, a fateful moment for the USSR. Collectivisation has just taken place, bread rationing is about to be lifted, and the political terror is about to begin. The book ends – this is not to give away any secrets – with the assassination of Kirov, the tocsin for Stalin's political bloodbath.

Some of the book's most riveting chapters concern Stalin himself. Rybakov establishes a form of descriptive interior monologue as he describes the feelings of the children of the Arbat. Then he extends this technique to Stalin so that the process which recruits one boy into the KGB and sends the hero to Siberia is deciphered within the terms of Stalin's determination to become a new Tsar. The great leader's mixture of self-confidence, malicious bitterness, and insecurity, is wonderfully done.

The attitudes and the sex lives of the young protagonists are callow. But as the stories of 1934 unravel, the novel's main theme emerges. Namely, human integrity – those who have it and those who do not.

Despite the crushing of socialism under Stalin, Rybakov implies, a socialist man emerged. One with a small 's', but perhaps all the better for that: individuals able to retain their humanity while tempered by a profound sense of their history. A history that is also ours. ●
Anthony Barnett



The People's Future Past

Reviving The English Revolution: Reflections And Elaborations On The Work Of Christopher Hill
Edited by Geoff Eley and William Hunt Verso £29.95

The English, like the French and the Russians, once had a revolution that 'turned the world upside-down'. Nobody, in nearly 50 years of writing and argument, has done more than Christopher Hill to make their 20th century descendants understand the meaning and importance of that great upheaval three centuries ago.

Hill's work, along with that of his former colleagues in the Communist Party Historians' Group, was at the forefront of that shift in the public understanding of British history which took place in the 1960s and 70s, placing the masses, 'the people', their struggles and their social consciousness, in the centre of the picture, rescuing them, in the words of E P Thompson, 'from the enormous condescension of posterity'.

But not even the dead are safe from the Thatcherite project which requires a history as well as a politics conforming to the tenets of authoritarian individualism. Alongside the public calls from Keith Joseph, and Thatcher herself, for a school history highlighting the national glories of conquest, empire and great people, an academic counter-offensive, associated especially with the names of people such as Alan Macfarlane and Jonathan Clarke, has aimed both to methodologically discredit the radical historians and to demonstrate that the Thatcher regime embodies the most deeply grounded and historically persistent traits of the national character.

This volume takes up that debate; partly in direct riposte to Hill's detractors, partly to celebrate his achievement, but mainly to explore certain themes in social and cultural history springing from his writings.

The contributors, whether or not professing marxists, all follow Hill's own approach in tackling the economy, intellectual climate, political, religious and popular beliefs 'in their interrelations rather than in isolation'. For example, how many people who have read of the Cato Street Conspiracy of 1820 realise that one of the men hanged for participation in that revolutionary enterprise was black?

We learn about it from Peter Linebaugh on the diaspora of radical ideas driven from British shores after the king's restoration in 1660 and returning a century later via the Americas and the victims of the slave trade.

Within the 18 contributions, always stimulating although sometimes highly technical, covering topics from class structure to female prophets to Milton, lie two striking areas of silence.

While the Atlantic implications of the English Revolution get much attention – as they should – other parts of the British Isles remain neglected. Scotland has little mention and Ireland even less, though both affected profoundly the way the revolution developed and the nature of its final outcome.

The second absence relates to Hill's own historical and cultural situation. The centrality to his project of the years he spent with the Historians' Group is noted, even stressed, but never explained. (Not even a mention of A L Morton's *People's History*).

We get no clue about his motives for joining the CP and only the most cursory one for his leaving in 1957. Making such a point is not a way of claiming for the CP some long-distance credit for what Hill has subsequently done but rather to propose a serious discussion of the Anglo-marxist tradition which formed him intellectually and which he himself has been so distinguished in reformulating. ●
Willie Thompson

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CHANNEL 5

Raymond Carver's Ordinary Lives

Elephant and Other Stories
Raymond Carver
Collins Harvill £9.95

Reading **Elephant**, which will now be Raymond Carver's last collection of stories, in the week following his death at the age of 49, has left me sad. Carver has published poems and three major collections of superb short stories (also available as *The Stories of Raymond Carver (Picador)*.

The stories are populated by American working-class people – mechanics, waitresses, salesmen, loggers – who live in a world of hunting, fishing, unstable marriages and insecure employment. Carver's characters, generally set down in small towns in the northwestern USA or in the Midwest, might be casually defined as 'rednecks', and their locale dismissed as 'middle America'. But the marvellous thing about Carver's fiction is the way in which he lives with his characters, inhabiting their lives rather than just knowing them. The best of his stories reclaim the supposed nullity and insensitivity of middle America, however hesitantly, for the life of the heart.

There is in Carver's fiction a sense, not of waste and loss, but of arrested possibility in these ordinary lives. Many of the stories turn and conclude with stirrings of change, movement towards new understanding, which are seldom named but simply grow mysteriously out of events.

Couples circle round the unspoken in their relationship, sometimes achieving resolution through an odd occasion that seems to reverberate. Sometimes an object, some small weird thing, becomes the catalyst for a profound experience, a perception that is never labelled, just described.

In 'Feathers', an odd couple keep a dental cast of the wife's dreadful teeth on the television because the husband's declaration: 'We're going to have them teeth fixed.' had been received as his first declaration of love.

'Cathedral' is a superbly moving piece which tells of an encounter with a blind man. The narrator moves with complete credibility from irritation and hostility to a state of empathy with the condition of blindness.

The medium of these perceptions is Carver's remarkable prose style which blends highly-polished, deliberately-spare narration with a sure grasp of colloquial diction. The stories are often recounted in the present tense, within a framework of recollection, over a drink, around a kitchen table, in the barber shop. While most of Carver's characters do not articulate much awareness of their economic and social placement, as a narrator in 'Elephant' says, 'Autobiography is the poor man's history'.

In this last collection of stories there is perhaps a trend towards more explicit interpretation. Narrators itch with difficulty towards specific interpretations of the muted epiphanies embodied in the odd, scarcely explicable moments or objects in their lives.

But in 'Menudo', the best of this collection, such implications are left completely open for the reader to intuit; the act of raking leaves becomes, without precociousness or affectation, a kind of sacrament, or penance, which the narrator hopes will somehow clarify or purify his impossible position between two women whom he has loved.

For me, Raymond Carver's greatest story probably remains 'A Small Good Thing'.

Carver: A sense of arrested possibility

A contribution to the recent genre of stories about the death of children, this story presents such a haunting blend of unspeakable loss with a mysterious sense of consolatory blessing that I've been unable ever to reread it. But I know that, like all the best of Carver's stories, it is unbearably beautiful in its strange, quiet resonance. ●
Donald Fraser

Following Doctor's Orders

Strong Medicine
Steve Iliffe
Lawrence and Wishart £5.95

By showing that there is the need for a constructive socialist health policy, which offers the prospect of a more effective health service to replace the current policy of more of the same, Steve Iliffe has filled a gap in the current debate, if such it is, on the health service.

Iliffe identifies two key questions for the Left: how to control the work of the professionals who he sees as the real consumers of health budgets, and how to make the individual citizen a genuine owner of the health service. He argues rightly that throwing more money at the problems will not of itself resolve these two issues, issues which face health services in all developed countries.

Familiar background is covered: how the health service has changed since 1948 both in terms of finance and range of services but also how, with all its sophistication, it has failed to diminish the enduring differences in health status between different social classes.

In all countries health care costs have outstripped increases in national income, but there is little evidence to show that more expenditure leads to improvements in general health. Yet the list of new and expensive technologies clamouring to be introduced grows daily.

Iliffe argues that the Left must recognise that any health service cannot meet all the demands on it and that promoting personal responsibility for health can be complementary to the continuation of central responsibility. Certainly increasing the population's awareness of the real impact of the health service and identifying the contribution each can make to his or her own health and the health of others is a necessary objective. But as Iliffe repeatedly acknowledges, we are short of answers to the familiar problems.

We have an abundance of questions though, and this book identifies how we might debate them.

If Labour's front bench have not already included this book in their holiday reading, I hope Walworth Road will send on a few copies urgently. ●
David Costain

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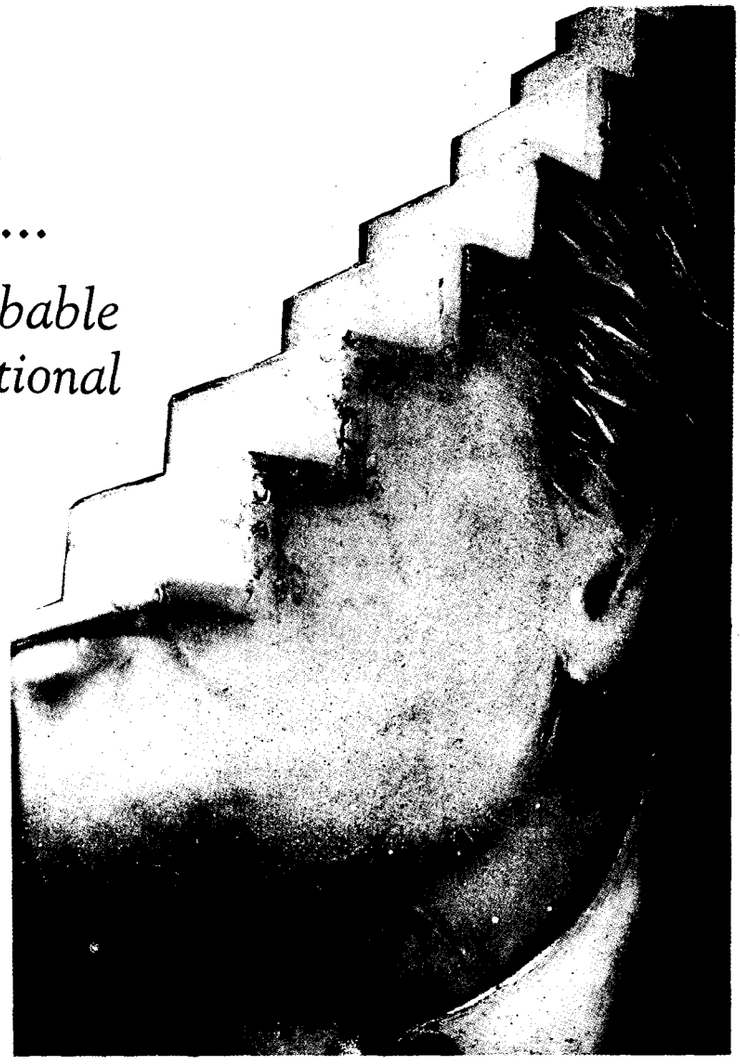

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M·T EVENTS

● **Haringey:** "Roads to Socialism" with CP General Secretary, Gordon McLennan, at Hornsey Library, Haringey Park, London N4 on Tuesday September 20, 8 pm. Organsised by Haringey Marxism Today Group. Details (01) 348 8915.

● **Scotland:** "What's Left in Scotland?" Marxism Today Scottish weekend event, Glasgow, November 4-6. Speakers include Beatrix Campbell, Mick McGahey, Stuart Hall. Details, (041) 339 5022.

● **Manchester:** "Rolling back the Right". Marxism Today event for women. Speakers include Ros Brunt, Ruth Lister and Anne Pettifor. Saturday October 15. 10-5pm, Manchester Town Hall. Details, (061) 861 0985

● **Newcastle:** "Northern Women Alive". Day event for women. Saturday October 29, 9.30-6pm at Newcastle University. Organised by Northern CP with Marxism Today. Details, (091) 276 2574.

● **Birmingham:** "Perestroika 88". Midlands Marxism Today event, Saturday October 22, 10-5pm at Key Books, 136 Digbeth, Birmingham. Details, (021) 643 8081.

● **Yeovil:** "Yeovil Left Unlimited". Day event with Peter Crampton, Jon Bloomfield and Soviet speaker. Saturday September 15, 9.30-5pm. At Holcott House, Yeovil College. Organised by Yeovil CP with Marxism Today. Details, (0460) 77084.

● **Southwark:** New Marxism Today Discussion Group starting in the Autumn, for details phone Nigel Power, (01) 231 2485.

EVENTS

● **Perestroika and the British Left:** National meeting organised by CPGB. Saturday September 24, 10-5pm at Key Books, Birmingham. Speakers include Monty Johnstone and Jon Bloomfield. Tkts, £2/£1 (Unwaged). Details, (021) 643 8081 (day)/(021) 443 2184 (Evng).

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● **Apartheid and Mental Health.** Psychology News is distributing the videos of Central TV's **Forgotten Millions** (a 52 minute film on the treatment of the mentally ill across the globe, seen on ITV, and also Channel 4's recent **Apartheid: The Stress on the Mind,** which looks at the impact of South Africa's policy on the mental health of both blacks and whites. **Forgotten millions** with accompanying book is £23; **Apartheid** is £15. Orders to Psychology News, 28, Vincent st, Seymour Pl., London W1.

MISCELLANEOUS

● **Wanted** for dissertation on Women in Sport, information from sportswomen past or present. Contact Pamela, 1, Mitcham Rd., Seven Kings, Ilford, Essex IG3 8QW. Tel. 590 0833.

● **Gay male Feminist** plans to start discussion group; would welcome any ideas for topics. Box 25.

● **Wanted for research:** Information on tough, fascist character building methods from past and present school rebels. Box 31.

● **Try Scottish Letter Link** (MT) for new *contacts outside your usual circle.* Details PO Box 61, Edinburgh, EH3 6JW.

Tashnat Ties The Knot!
Saturday August 27 and it's new times for Natasha and Steve as they prove once again that ideology is no match for tradition. But here's to the whole day being warm, fluffy, pink and very moist and the truth is we all can't wait to see the video! Lots of love from everyone at MT xxxx

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Contributors

Jon Halliday is the author (with Bruce Cumings) of *Korea: The Unknown War*, a pictorial history of the war (Viking, 1988).
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Additional contributions to this issue:
Production: James Conneely, Lesley Kemp, Jenni Moore, Neil Partrick, Jon Ross, Danae Tankard, Jennifer Tankard, Jenny Walsh, Jon Winter.

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Nick Logan

In the early 1980s, *The Face* rose at pace, perceptively pinpointing a post-Punk need for Opposition. Nick Logan, one-time editor of the *New Musical Express* and originator of *Smash Hits*, spotted another trend and saw the space for a new magazine. For many people, being designed came to satisfy the traditional need for youth to say 'I'm different'. *The Face* was first there.

Next shops, pop videos, pop stars and other magazines have really disseminated *Face* values right across culture. Eight years later even Radio 4 wants youth/style programmes and *The Daily Telegraph* has regular spreads of dramatically-photographed 'fashion'. *The Face*'s killer 100th issue celebration is a resting on laurels, sturdy proof that, though people have tried, no-one can really outdo *The Face* at being *The Face*.

The size of the 100th issue alone implies a captive audience, a confidence that bespeaks a practised and frequently interviewed celebrity. The editorial can be eccentric, do what it likes – it's as big as Whacko Jacko.

However, to Nick Logan's credit, the titles, the shots, the layout – no one can deny it's done by a team with a good eye. And when you read it, it's not bad either. The writers can throw capable puns and popularise theory within the same line.

Why was it and is it so popular? Why is it one of the first places to look in describing the 80s?

Basically, its effect is that Britain has a glossy shrine to post-modernism on the newsstands each month. *The Face*'s ability to treat politics, clothes, death, pop stars, Aids, the past, cultural analysis, nightclub cliques, film stars etc, in the same breath is a key element both in its success and importance as a cultural artefact.

Early on, Nick Logan realised that you didn't need to hang around making contexts: people channel-zap, they witness a fluidity of texuality on tv, they don't need it all framed, therefore packaged, with sharp lines in a magazine.

Secondly, in the fashion photos and general deployment of 'looks', history exists as one large set of slides to be wittily backprojected behind the models. History as hair conditioner – it makes everything more manageable and free of knots. Coalminers, the 40s, bikers, Red Indians, Palestinian soldiers, and lately even the 70s have been plundered in search of new 'angles', new 'looks'.

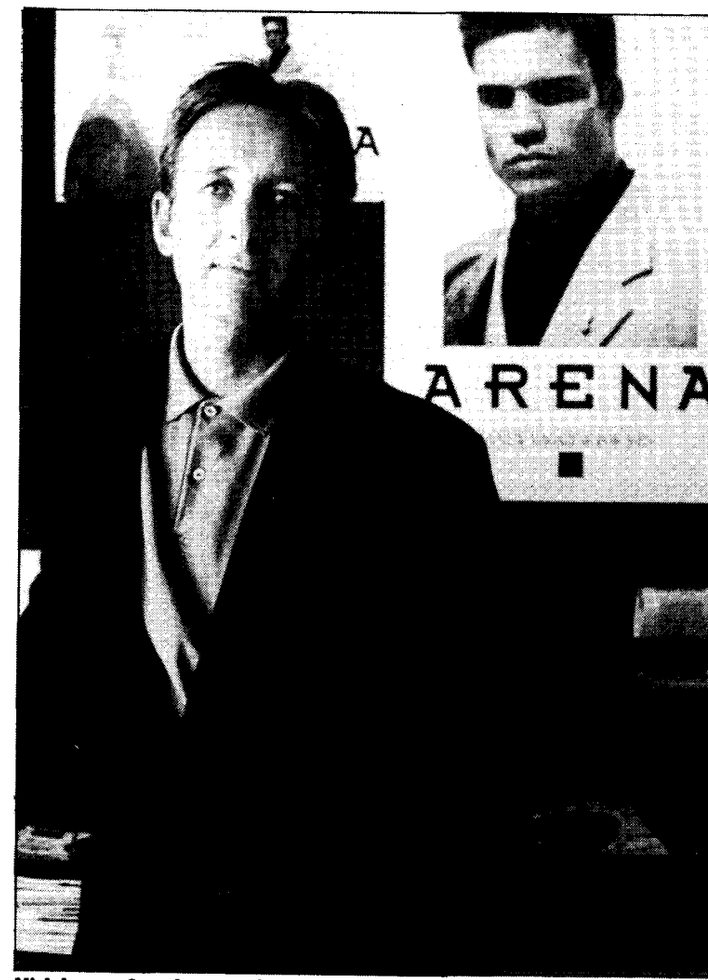
Inevitably then, everything becomes plaything, meaning doesn't seem that meaningful anymore – the history of Cuba is really the history of salsa – that kind of thing is *The Face*'s net effect.

However, this is not to say that *The Face* created these themes or that it can be made to carry much of the can; in wider terms (Ruskin, Morris, Eliot etc,) the Death of Meaning is hardly anything new. But in the 80s *The Face* has been central in giving it new glamour and making this the prime lens for a particular youthscape.

As a further twist, many of its writers could hardly be said to write approvingly of the very themes that *The Face* appears to symbolise. The writing itself must be taken into account as different – it isn't often a mere adjunct to the commercial status quo that *Sky* and so many other *Face* imitators regularly descend to.

Now we're at the 100th issue, what *The Face* once epitomised has dissipated. Nick Logan's next issue will be Volume Two, Number 1. He wants something different. Where to next? The big problem here is that all the trends *The Face* seems to exemplify are by no means over.

Television for example has only just started: *Network 7*, *Rough Guide*, *Def II* – there's more on the way. *Marie Claire* and other *Face*-inspired magazines are to be launched, Radio 3 is currently hard at work on the next generation of youth issues programmes. *The Face* mixture of messing around with visual conventions, cheek, depth and fun is here to stay.



Ken Sharp

Nick Logan: Saw the space for a new magazine

However, as the 80s draw to a close, so too does a certain style era. If *The Face* is going to stay ahead, it seems ironic that it will probably have to lead a backlash against the very approaches and attitudes – the style culture – that it once championed. Some new punk 'let's cut the crap' attitude needs to be found. (Elements of this can perhaps be seen in the Acid House scene, people wearing crimpolene flares and gold platform boots – who could honestly say they liked them? It's nihilistic, ironic as well as being 100% non-suitable.)

Like a Hydra or an animation by Svankmajer, *The Face* needs to bite off its own head and throw up. Masochistically be director of its own demise. Maybe *The Face* should go back to xerox sheets, commercial free *samizdat* of clandestine clubbing and dissident thought.

However, the reality of what we can expect to happen is more like that of an ageing pop star; the mag will grow up with its fans and just end up appealing to an older, more serious, more powerful, but no longer at the forefront of what's happening, group. Logan could fumble, lose his way and become vague – the timeless privilege of anyone precocious. But he has a great track record and he may yet again have an idea everybody else is just missing.●

George Barber

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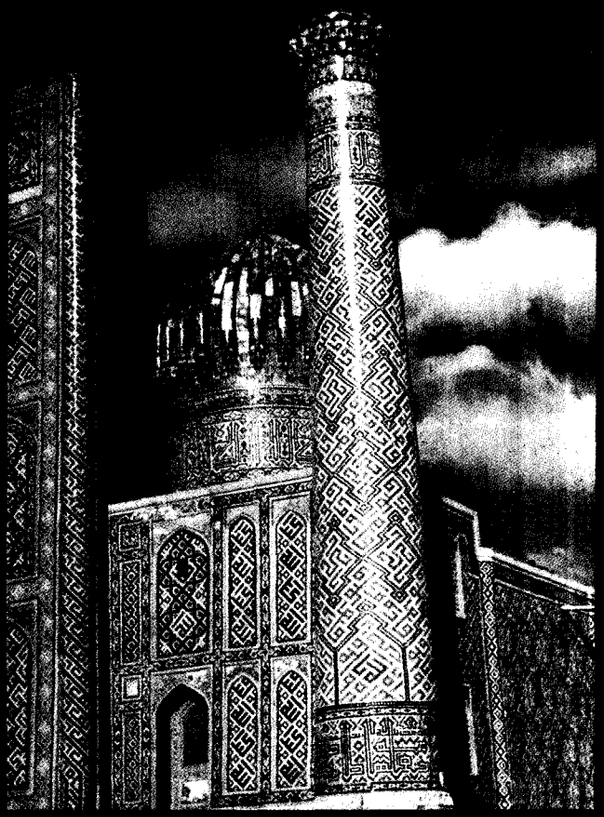

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